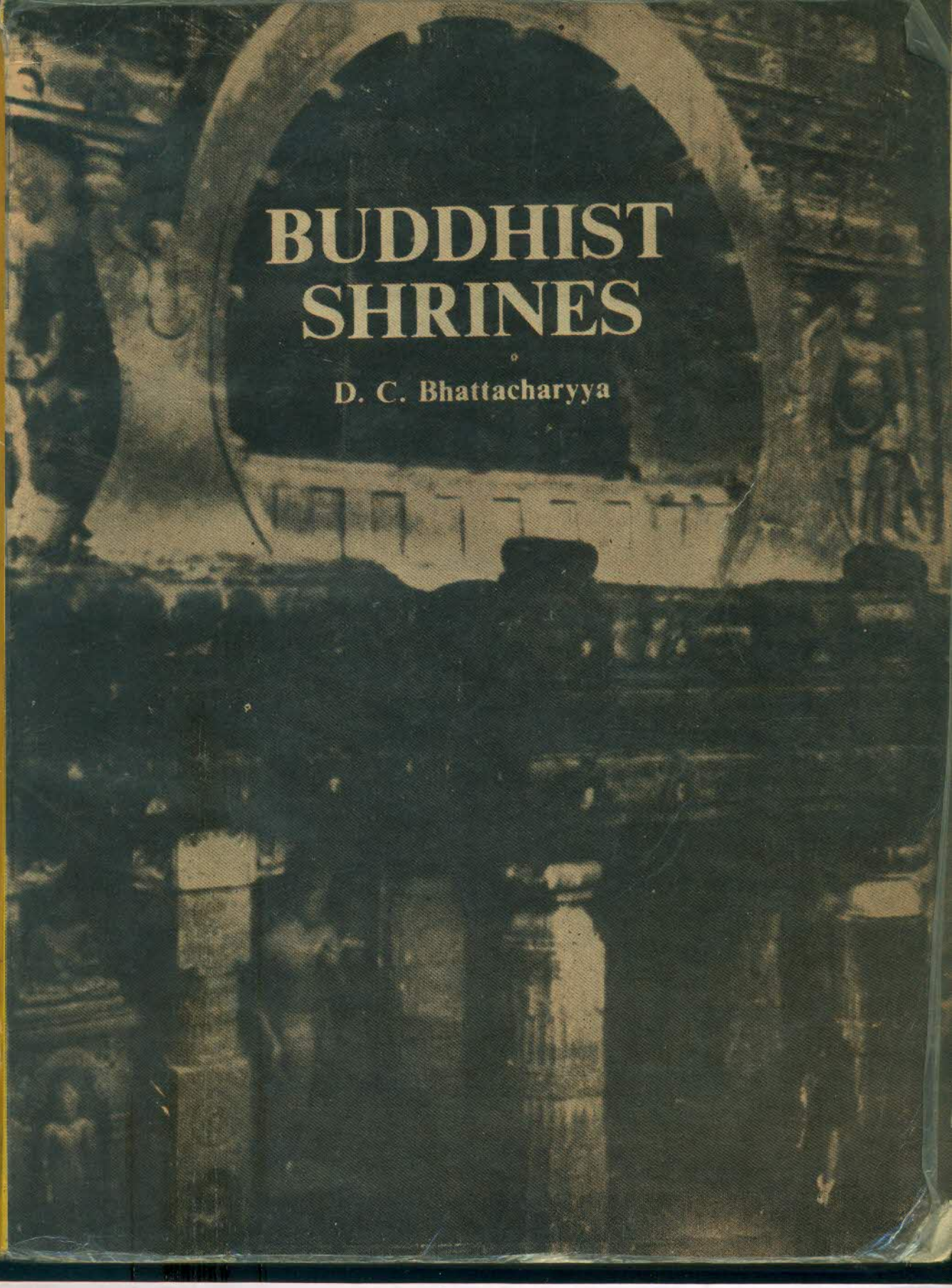

BUDDHIST SHRINES

D. C. Bhattacharyya

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PROFESSOR B.N. GOSWAMY

Preface

This book takes into account only the major Buddhist Shrines in India and abroad. It is not an inventory of the shrines. Nor it is their historical account in the chronological sense. Major shrines of Buddhism have been noted here together with the basic information about their respective highlights as the monuments of Buddhism. Such information which are historically authentic have only been incorporated. For the understanding of the nature of these shrines, and for the appreciation of their Buddhistic characteristics, some basic information about the life and legend of the Buddha and of the historical developments taking place within Buddhism throughout the centuries, had to be given in the introductory chapter.

The chapter divisions are there only to serve as the frame of reference. It has to be admitted that there are overlappings and, for obvious reasons, a few omissions and commissions in respect of the arrangement of the shrines within zones and in the distribution of them for the sake of convenience. Some of the shrines of Bangladesh had to be discussed along with the shrines falling under the eastern zone of India, because that is how they fitted more appropriately in the narrative. Similarly, a few shrines of the Himalayan regions of India were segregated into an appendix in view of the fact that their relevance, in the narrative sense, is not much with the shrines of the northern zone of India where, otherwise, they could have been alternatively fitted.

The writings of many scholars have been of immense help. I remain grateful to all of them. But my indebtedness is more to the illustrious scholar, Mrs. Debala Mitra, whose writings have served me as the source. I express my thanks to the Publications Division of the Ministry of Information and Brodacasting, Government of India for having given me the opportunity of travelling, although mentally, into the Buddhist places of pilgrimage.

I remain grateful to Nilima and Tirthankar for their help.

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Chapter One

Introduction

THE birth of the prince Siddhārtha to Śuddhodana, the ruler of Kapilavastu (identified by some scholars with Piprahwa, District Basti, Uttar Pradesh and with Tilaurakot, District Taulihawa, Nepalese Tarai, by others) was a significant event in the history of mankind. The royal soothsayers prophesied that the newly born prince was destined to be either a universal monarch or the supremely enlightened one. Inspite of the fact that the father brought up the boy with luxurious pampering and amidst surroundings away from all cares and afflictions of this world, three ominous sights, one after the other—old age, disease and death—convinced the prince of the futility of worldly pleasures. He resolved to seek for the true knowledge which could end misery. At the age of twentynine, when he was a married youth with a son, he left his home and family and set himself to a long and tireless quest for salvation, not merely for himself but for the entire mankind. Discarding the royal robes in preference for the attire of the monk, Siddhārtha wandered about as an ascetic seeking instructions from the-then religious teachers. But nothing could satisfy him. At Uruvilva, near Gaya in Bihar, he practised the most rigid austerities, but the Truth still eluded him. He realised that self-mortification was not the means to Enlightenment.

On the full-moon day of the month of Vaiśākha (May), taking bath in the river Nairañjanā (modern Lilajan), he sat himself down in the evening at the foot of a pipal tree with the strong determination, "Let my skin, sinews and bones shrivel and wither; let my flesh and blood dry up. I will not stir from this seat until I have attained supreme and absolute insight." He resolutely resisted the temptation of *Māra* (Evil Force), who left discomfited, and thus attained Enlightenment or *Bodhi*. Thereafter he came to be known as the Buddha or the Enlightened One. He was also known as the Tathāgata or one who had attained the Truth and Śākyamuni or the sage of the Śākya clan. Thenceforth his personal name was virtually substituted by the *gotra* name Gautama, and he came to be known as Gautama Buddha who is supposed to be the seventh Buddha, after six of his predecessors, viz., Vipaśyī, Śikhī, Kanakamuni, Krakuchchhanda, Viśvabhū and Kāśyapa.

In order to teach the Truth that he had attained, Gautama Buddha proceeded to the Deer Park (*Mrigadāva*) at Isipatana or Ṛiṣipattana (Sarnath) near Benaras. He delivered the first discourse to the five monks (*Pañchavargīyas*)—Kouṇḍinya, Bhadrīya, Vappa, Mahānāmā and Aśvajit—his one time associates during the initial stage of his quest for the Truth. This is known as the 'setting of the Wheel of Law into motion' (*Dharma-Chakra-Pravartana*).

As he travelled up and down the country, preaching his doctrine (*Saddharma*), all ranks swelled the number of converts to the new faith and gradually they were all organized into a community or a *Saṅgha*. Gautama Buddha went again to Uruvilva where he performed many miracles, and converted the

Brahmin Kāśyapa and his brothers who were fire-worshipping *Jaṭilas*. He then went to Rājagṛiha (Rajgir), the capital of the king Bimbisāra of Magadha. Bimbisāra gifted him the bamboo-grove (*Veṇuvana*) where Gautama Buddha took up his abode for some time. Here he made many converts including the two Brahmins Kolita and Upatiṣya, who later got the names of Sāriputra and Maudgalyāyana and became the close disciples of the Buddha. Then he went to Kapilavastu where his father, step-mother, wife and son met him. His son Rāhula and the royal barber Upāli joined the community. Most probably during this time, Ānanda also joined it. For 45 years, till his death at Kuśinārā (Kasia, Gorakhpur district in Uttar Pradesh), at the age of eighty, the life of Gautama Buddha was one of incessant activity, teaching and preaching, continually travelling on foot, except during the three months of the monsoon.

II

There is no consensus among historians on the dates of Buddha's birth and death. But it is generally accepted now that he was born in 563 or 566 B.C. and died in 483 or 486 B.C. Thus he seems to have lived between the last quarters of the sixth and the fifth centuries B.C.—a period of great intellectual ferment in the world. During this period significant movements seem to have stirred men's mind in various parts of the world, such as Confucius and Lao-tse in China, Zoroaster in Iran and Buddha and Mahāvīra in India. In Rome, the last of the kings had come and gone, while in Greece the tyrants had been replaced by a more democratic form of government. Pythagoras was then conducting his famous school, while the philosopher Heraclitos was giving to the world his doctrine of the fluid nature of all things.

In India, there were many flourishing cities and well-organized states, some democratic, others ruled by kings. In the sphere of religion, the *Vedas* still held great sway and the Brahmins, who were the custodians of this learning, had become a hereditary priesthood. It was claimed that the performance of sacrifices was necessary to keep the world's order going and that the Brahmins were the gods on earth. It was even asserted by some that the path of ritual could make men greater than the gods. Vedic rites often included animal sacrifices which gave the religion a cruel and revolting character. There were, however, others who conceived of a different approach to the religious performance and indulged in austerity or self-mortification. There were others who, inspired with a passion for truth, and a deep longing to solve the mysteries of existence, left home and family and sought, in the seclusion of forest or as wandering mendicants, opportunity for meditation and self-development.

It was into this religious and philosophical atmosphere that the Buddha made his debut. His teachings must have come as a great moral strength to the people. The new gospel in essence was simplicity itself. His message consisted of Four Noble Truths (*Chatvāri Āryasatyāni*) : that worldly existence is full of misery (*Duḥkha*), that its cause (*Samudaya*) is attachments, that by suppression (*Nirodha*) of these attachments the emancipation from misery or *Nirvāṇa* can be achieved, and that for achieving this goal there exists a path (*Mārga*). "To live mastered by the body", said he, "or to live totally neglecting the body, is equally wrong. There is a middle course" which consists of the noble eight-fold path (*Aṣṭāṅgika-Mārga*) : right view, right thought, right speech, right conduct, right livelihood, right exertion, right mindfulness, and right contemplation.

It was a very practical sermon and went straight to the heart of the people. His

teaching was a frank recognition of the facts of life, a just estimate of their values. It was the one religion that called upon man unequivocally to trust himself, to raise himself by his own exertion, to govern and control and form himself. The clarion call sounded of human liberty : "Be ye refuges unto yourself; be ye your salvation."

But this sole emphasis on humanity, as laid down by the Buddha himself in his teaching, gradually melted into other priorities in the course of the history of Buddhism. During his life time, the teachings of the Buddha were not recorded. After his demise there arose disputes and controversies not only in respect of the content of his instructions, but also with regard to their interpretations. To resolve such disputes and to systematize the Buddhist norms and laws, a number of Buddhist Councils (*Saṅgītis*) were held : the first one immediately after the death of the Buddha was held at Rājagṛiha, the second one, about a century later at Vaiśālī, the third one, at Pāṭaliputra during the time of Aśoka (3rd century B.C.), and the fourth one during the time of Kaṇiṣka (Ist century A.D.) in Kashmir or Peshawar. Through these Councils, and in the trail of subsequent developments, the original complexion of Buddhism got changed. Divisions and subdivisions crept into the community. To start with, the orthodox and the radicalists—the smaller and the larger vehicles (*Hinayāna* and *Mahāyāna*), as they came to be known—parted ways. The Buddha was deified and the concept of the Trinity—*Buddha* (the Master), *Dharma* (the Law) and *Saṅgha* (the Church)—was recognized as the essence of the religion. And through the subsequent transformations and developments through Vajrayāna, Tantrayāna and Kālachakrayāna, a pantheon with all paraphernalia of hierarchy and ritualism was introduced into Buddhism. Thus not only the original spirit of the religion got diffused, it also lost ground in the land of its birth. It was not due to any political reason, but to a series of socio-economic factors that moulded the cultural history of India through these centuries.

III

During the lifetime of Gautama Buddha, the religion was more or less confined within the limits of Kośala and Magadha which were the main centres of his activities. For a little over two centuries, the faith remained dormant. The turning point in the history of the religion was the conquest of Kaliṅga by Aśoka. The tragic realities of war left a deep impression on the mind of Aśoka. He gave up conquest by the force of arms and instituted, in its place, a novel and noble policy, that of *Dhammavijaya*, i.e., victory by the law of piety. His inscriptions, found all over the country, are a monumental proof of the sincere concern of the monarch for his people to follow the *Dhamma*. Aśoka was tolerant and broad-minded, and he gave the same respect to all religions. But Buddhism appealed to his heart more and he gave it a great fillip by not only propagating the essence of the *Dhamma*, but also by taking the message of the Buddha far beyond the shores of India. Missions were sent by him to such distant places as the land of the Yavanas (Ionian Greeks), Gandhāra, Kashmir, Himalayan regions, Aparānta (Western India), the South including Vanavāsi and Mysore, and far beyond to Ceylon and Suvarṇabhūmi or Sumātrā. He sent his son Mahendra and daughter Saṅghamitrā to Ceylon for the transmission of Buddhism to that land.

The leadership taken by Aśoka for the spread of Buddhism was continued by

several kings of the subsequent periods. The Sātavāhanas in the Deccan, though followers of the Brahmanical faith, were very tolerant and gave impetus to the Buddhist faith. One of the later rulers of the dynasty, it is believed, was a great friend of the Buddhist saint Nāgārjuna. The Greek king Menander was a great protagonist of Buddhism and during his time the faith was established firmly in the land of the Yavanas. Kaṇiṣka, the great Kuṣāṇa ruler, gave immense patronage to Buddhism, and, during his time, the Māhayāna form of Buddhism was initiated and it progressed far beyond the shores of India, in Central Asia and China. His contemporary Aśvaghoṣa gave the literary rendering of the life story of the Buddha in his celebrated *Buddhacharita*. The Gupta rulers were the *Paramabhāgavatas* or the worshippers of Viṣṇu. But their sympathy for Buddhism and support of all kinds to it are borne out by the evidence of history. The Gupta rulers patronized the Nālandā University which was a great centre of Buddhist learning. Some of the masterpieces of Buddhist art belong to the period of the Guptas. The Chinese traveller Fa-hien, who visited India during the time of Chandragupta II, has left a glorious account of the prosperity of Buddhism during the period. Of the post-Gupta rulers of India, Harṣavardhana of the seventh century A.D. is the most illustrious in extending support and inspiration to Buddhism. During his time, the Chinese traveller Hiuen-tsang visited India and he has left an account not only of the state of Buddhism during the time, but also of the keen interest and participation of the emperor in various activities of the faith. The Pāla rulers of Eastern India were great adherents of Buddhism. During their time, the Vikramaśilā and the Odantapurī monasteries in Eastern India became great seats of Buddhist learning. Through the protection and patronage of the Pāla rulers, Buddhism flourished with considerable importance during the period between the ninth and the twelfth centuries A.D.

Tradition has it that Khotan received Buddhism even in the days of Aśoka. Kucha and Turfan in Chinese Turkistan received Buddhism in the first century A.D. through the efforts of the Kuṣāṇa ruler Kaṇiṣka. About the same time, Buddhism entered into China. The Wei dynasty in the fourth century A.D. made Buddhism the state religion. That the Chinese travellers Fa-hien and Hiuen-tsang were attracted towards the land of Buddha is a testimony to the extent of impression that the faith might have made in China at that time. It was through their efforts that numerous Buddhist texts were translated into Chinese.

In the fourth century A.D., Buddhism was introduced in Korea. From there it travelled to Japan. The native cult of the land, known as Shintoism, was absorved by Buddhism which spread in the country very rapidly. The Horyuji temple near Nara, founded in 607 A.D., is the oldest Buddhist temple in Japan. Prince Shotoku (474-622 A.D.) was a devout Buddhist. He did a great deal to help Buddhism, and the art and culture associated with it, to strike roots in Japanese society.

Nepal is the land of the Buddha. He was born at Lumbini, identified with Rummindei in District Bhairhwa, Nepalese Tarai. The Aśokan pillar at this spot declares, "Here was born the sage of the Śākyas." The tradition has it that sometimes after his enlightenment, the Buddha visited Kapilavastu and preached his message to a vast number of his people. In the fourth century A.D.,

Ācharya Vasubandhu formally propagated the faith in Nepal. From there the faith was transmitted to Tibet. The marriage between the daughter of the Nepalese king Aṁśuvarman and the Tibetan king Sron-btsan-sgam-po paved the way for the spread of Buddhism from Nepal to Tibet. The Tibetan scholars like Thon-mi, Sambho-ta and others came to the seats of learning in India and they translated Sanskrit Buddhist works for transmitting the knowledge into their country. On the invitation of the Tibetan ruler, Śāntarakṣita of Nālandā went to Tibet and translated numerous Sanskrit Buddhist works into Tibetan. At his instance, Padmasambhava, an able exponent of Tāntrism, was invited from the Swat Valley to introduce Tāntrism in Tibet. Another great master, Dīpaṅkara Atiśa, came from the Vikramaśilā monastery to propagate Buddhism in Tibet and his efforts have had lasting effects.

Aśoka's daughter and son were the first to take the message of the Buddha to Ceylon. They were received by the ruler Devānampiya Tissa. A sapling of the Bodhi Tree was transplanted there and *stūpas* and *vihāras* were built. The great *stūpa* of Ceylon was built by the king Duṭṭhagāmani. The Pāli *Tripiṭaka* was codified during the time of Vaṭṭagāmani in the first century B.C. and Ceylon became a great centre of *Theravāda* Buddhism.

At the instance of the emperor Aśoka, the monks Śoṇa and Uttara went to Suvarṇabhūmi or Sumātrā to spread the message of Buddhism. From there Burma and the adjoining areas got the faith. The *Theravāda* form of Buddhism can be traced in Burma from the fifth century A.D. The faith continued there through the centuries, and in the eleventh century, the emperor Aniruddha of Pagan built numerous Buddhist pagodas and monasteries. In the Malay Peninsula, the *Mahāyāna* form of Buddhism seems to have existed from a quite early period. There are inscriptions suggesting the building of *stūpas* in the eighth century A.D. In Thailand or Siam, Buddhism flourished from the beginning of the Christian era. Early remains of Buddhist art have been found from various places. Even in the seventh century, Dvārāvatī was an important centre of Buddhist culture, as evidenced from the accounts of Hiuen-tsang.

In Cambodia, Buddhism can be traced from about the fifth century. At a later stage, however, Buddhism became a leading religion here. Under Yaśovarman (ninth century) and Śūryavarman (eleventh century), for example, there came into being a new phase of Khmer Buddhist art, as a result of contact with Dvārāvatī (Thailand). Jayavarman VII (twelfth century) was a deeply devout man who gave strong encouragement to Buddhism. In Champa, the Mahāyāna form of Buddhism developed unhindered. The centre of Buddhism here was the monastery of Dong-duong, built in 875 A.D.

Buddhism was introduced into Indonesia between the second and the sixth centuries A.D. The *Hīnayāna* doctrine was the first to be introduced, but, from the first quarter of the seventh century onwards, it was followed by *Mahāyāna*, which soon came to hold a paramount position. The Śailendra dynasty, which ruled over Java from 778 to 864 A.D., gave powerful stimulus to Buddhist culture, particularly with the *Vajrayāna* ideas. The celebrated *stūpa*-complex, known as Borobudur, is a great monumental testimony to the grandeur of Buddhism in the country.

IV

During the lifetime of the Buddha, his presence was a living monument to the objectives before the followers of the faith. But once the Master was off the scene, the community felt the absence of the binding force—the charisma of the towering personality of the Buddha The void was felt by everybody, but its impact on the lay followers, particularly those belonging to the lower rungs of the society, was too strong to keep them on the common platform of the faith which was based more on volition than on ordained prescriptions of rituals. They were at least in need of a tangible souvenir to go by. It seems that Gautama Buddha could anticipate that such a necessity might arise after his death. It is possible that this foreknowledge prompted the Buddha to suggest, on his death bed, that *stūpas* should be erected over his mortal remains and that they should receive the honours of a universal monarch. Although this concession was a deviation from the original spirit of his teachings, it saved Buddhism from its immediate problem of a disorder. The Buddhist *stūpa* symbolized the presence of the Buddha. Thus was evolved the *stūpa* cult which characterized the early Buddhist theology for quite some time. Even after the worship of the image of the Buddha was incorporated into the faith, the *stūpa* continued to occupy a position of veneration.

Tradition has it that after the death of the Buddha, following his last instructions, eight *stūpas* were built over his corporeal remains by Ajātaśatru of Magadha, the Lichchhavis of Vaiśālī, the Śākyas of Kapilavastu, the Bulīs of Allakappa, the Koliyas of Rāmagrāma, the Mallas of Pāvā, a Brahmin of Veṭhadīpa, and the Brahmin Droṇa who divided the remains in eight equal parts. Two more *stūpas* were also built, one over the urn and the other over the embers. It is not possible to know what exactly was the shape of these *stūpas*, but it seems likely that they were built in the manner of the pre-Buddhist burial mounds. According to the Buddhist tradition, Aśoka opened seven out of the eight original *stūpas* and redistributed the relics among eightyfour thousand *stūpas* built by him throughout his empire. The great *stūpa* at Sāñchī is supposed to be one of the bigger ones built by the emperor. This *stūpa*, thus, can give us an idea about the basic architectural features of the form of an early *stūpa*.

The great *stūpa* at Sāñchī consists of a hemispherical dome (*aṇḍa*) flattened at the top and crowned by three superimposed umbrellas (*chhatrāvalī*) with their shaft (yaṣṭi) planted on a box-like structure (*harmikā*) within a square railing (*vedikā*). The dome is situated on a raised circular base (*medhi*), meant for circumambulation (*pradakṣiṇa*), approached by a balustraded double stairway (*sopāna*) on the South. Interestingly, this formulation has more or less been followed in most of the subsequent *stūpas* known to us. The variations between the one and the other are mostly in terms either of the emphasis on certain features or in the omissions and commissions of the innovative type. This is noticeable not only in the structural *stūpas*, but also in their replicas made either for the enshrinement or for being used as a religious memento.

Gradually the *stūpa* came to be recognized as a virtual icon of the Buddha. Thus it needed to be enshrined on an altar. Soon the *Chaitya-gṛihas* were thought of for this purpose. These *Chaitya-gṛihas* were mostly of the rock-cut type, and the most representative examples

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Birth of Buddha, Gandhara sculpture

The Great Departure, Gandhara sculpture

Fasting Buddha, Gandhara sculpture

Buddha in preaching pose, Sarnath sculpture

Miracle of Sravasti, Sarnath sculpture

Miracle of taming Nalagiri, Amravati sculpture

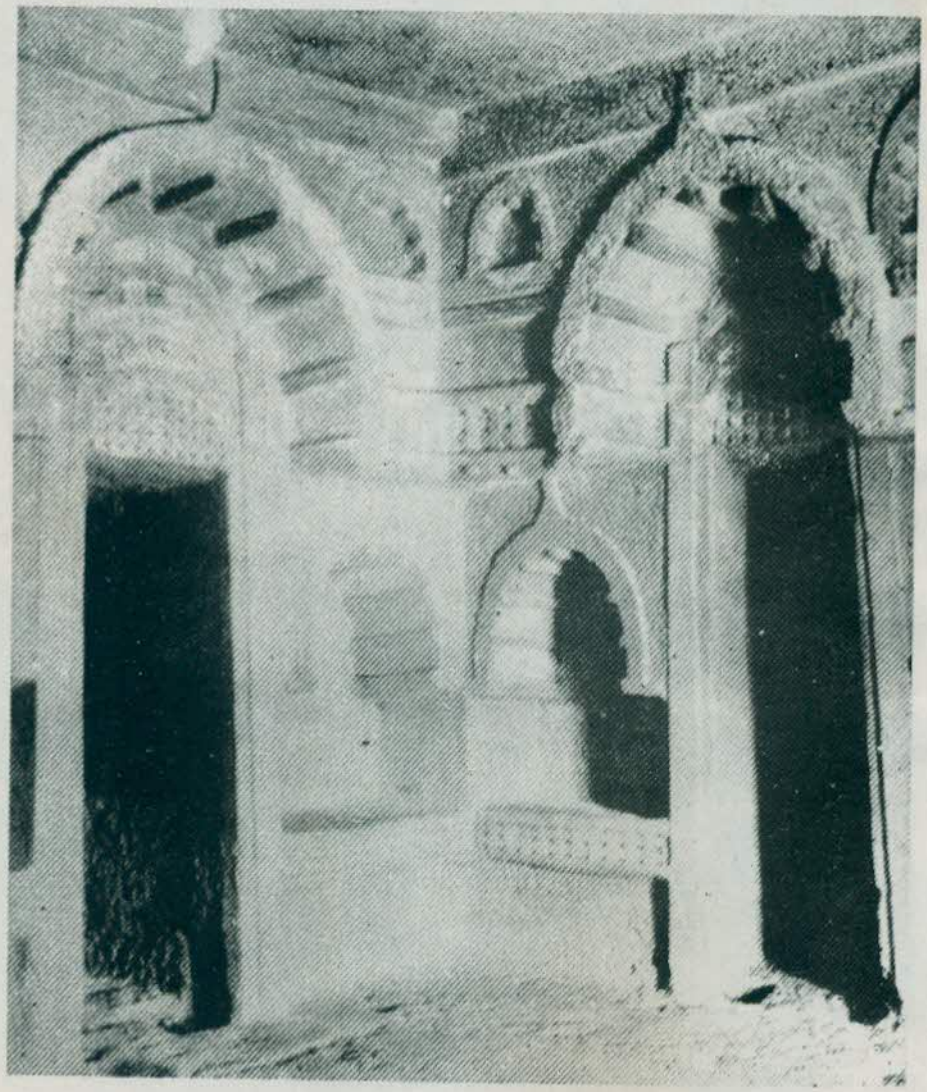
Mahaparinirvana of the Buddha, Gandhara sculpture

Foundation of the ***Jetavana-vihara,*** *Bharhut sculpture*

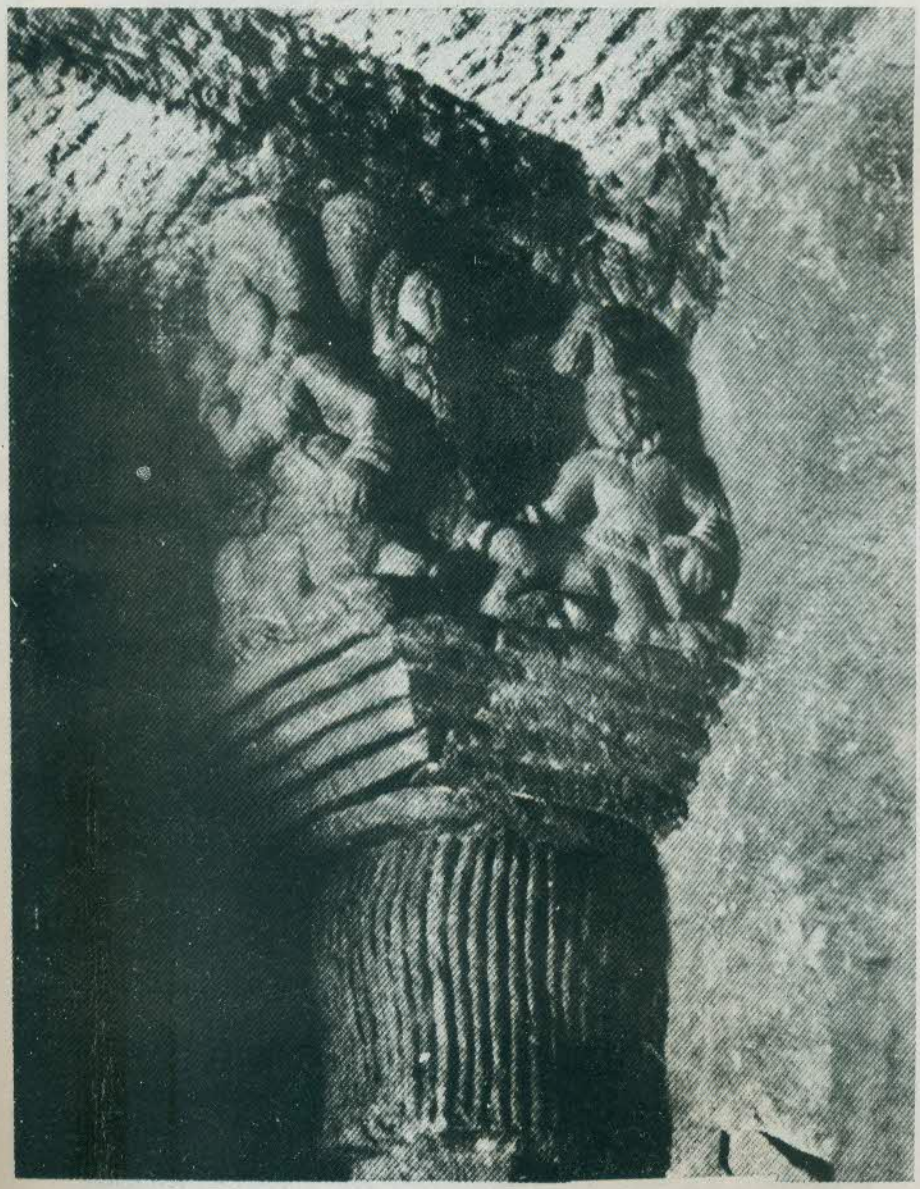
Mahaparinirvana of the ***Buddha,*** *Gandhara sculpture*

Lion Capital of Asokan Pillar at Sarnath

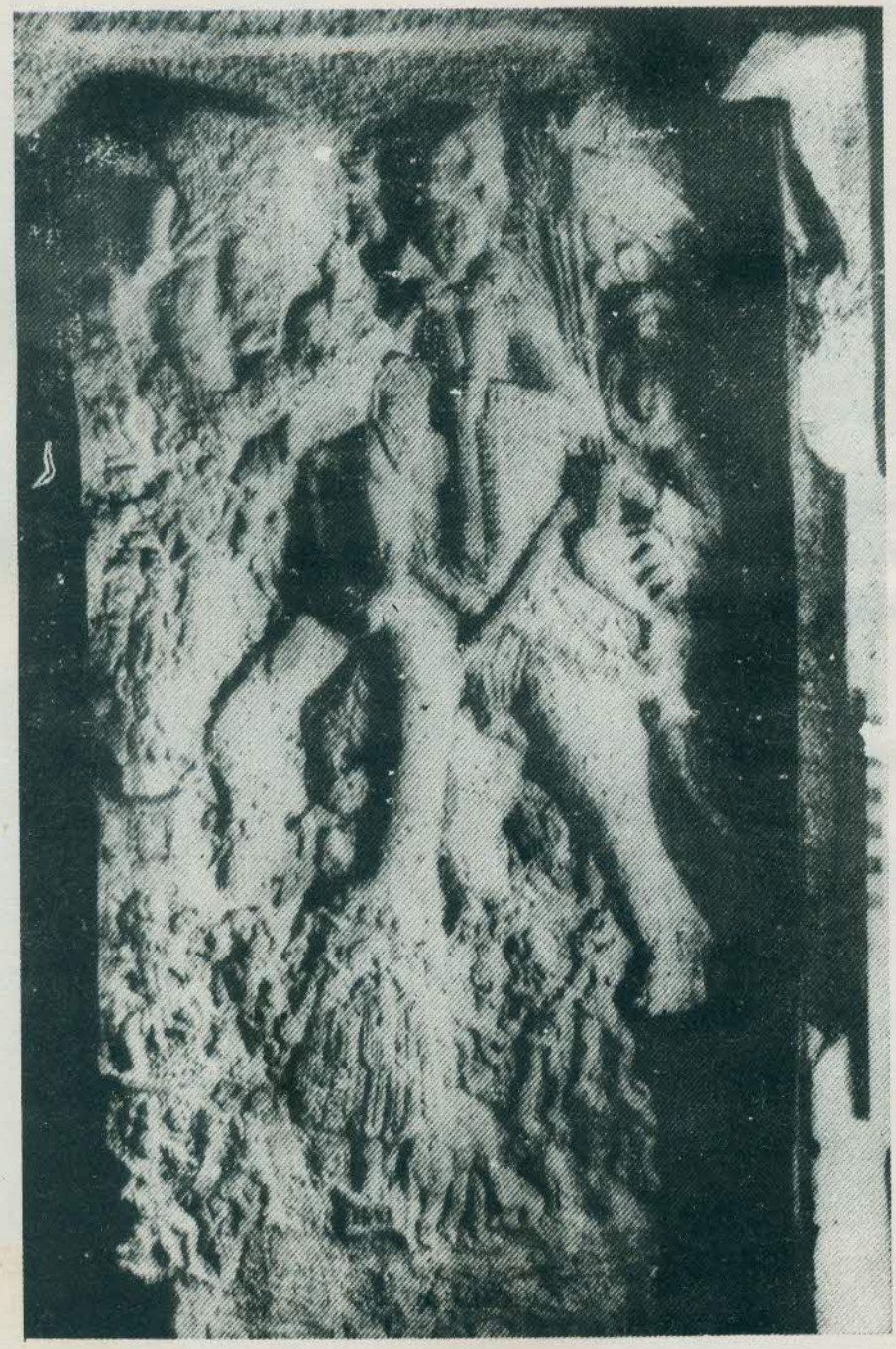
Eastern gate, main Stupa, Sanchi



Bhaja cave—Interior portion of the Vihara



Bhaja cave—Details of a pillar capital in the Vihara



Bhaja cave—Indra—a figure on Elephant in the Vihara

Vihara

could be noticed in Western Indian sites like Bhājā, Kārle, Koṇḍāne, Ajantā, Ellora. Although several variants of the *Chaitya-gṛihas* are known from different sites, the most common type partakes of a rectangular form, often with an apsidal back end. The ceiling has the barrel-vaulted shape, with a few exceptions. The room is entered through by one or more doorways, the central one usually having a semi-circular or horse-shoe-shaped window, known as the *Chaitya*-window, overhead. The hall is usually divided into three parts—the central nave and two side aisles—by means of a series of pillars. The *stūpa* or the *chaitya* is usually situated at the apsidal part of the nave.

Similar types of *chaitya* halls are often noticed with altogether a new orientation. A number of monastic cells are found carved inside the cave quite frequently. These were used by the Buddhist monks as their habitat (*vihāra*) usually during the rainy season. Such types of rock-cut monasteries or *vihāras* were perhaps in use even in the earlier times. Monasteries or *vihāras* of various dimensions and formulations are known from different parts of India. Apart from the rock-cut ones, several others are known which are of the structural type. Several examples, both of the rock-cut and of the structural types, are known to have more than one storey.

A full-fledged structural temple came into the scene at a later stage. It seems likely that a proper Buddhist temple came into the usage only after the image of the Buddha came to be represented.

Chapter Two

Sacred places in the life and legend of the Buddha

EVEN during his lifetime, Gautama Buddha became a human symbol virtually of the Divinity. Although his deification in the theological sense did not come immediately after his turning of the Wheel of Law at Sarnath, the towering personality of Gautama Buddha, coupled with the impact of the miracles performed by him, gradually transformed himself into the picture of a wise and powerful superman. This led to the formulation of the concept of the teacher and the saviour combining together in the Buddha. This being the basic characteristic of a saint, soon the people thought of Gautama Buddha as a divine being and, as a consequence of this, everything connected with him was considered to be sacred. As was expected, the places connected with the life and legend of the Buddha acquired unqualified glory and sanctity in the Buddhist lore. Of the numerous places, thus sanctified, eight, referred to as the eight great spots (*aṭṭhamahāṭhānāni*), stand out in view of the distinction of their intimate connection with major incidents in the life of the Buddha.

The eight great places fall under two broad categories, each consisting of four places. The first four places are related to the important historical events of the life of the Buddha, and the remaining four mark the places where he is supposed to have performed the miracles after he became the Enlightened One. The first four places are : Lumbinī where Gautama Buddha was born, Gayā or Bodhgayā where he attained Enlightenment (*Bodhi*), the Deer Park at Isipatana (Sārnāth) where he proclaimed the Law for the first time, and Kuśinagara where he obtained *Nirvaṇa* or the unconditioned state. Before his *Parinirvāṇa*, the Buddha spoke of these four places which a devout follower of the Faith should visit with reverence.

The remaining four places are those which were the locales of four of the principal miracles that Gautama Buddha was known to have performed. These are Śrāvastī, Śāṅkāśya, Rājagṛiha and Vaiśālī. At Śrāvastī, the capital of Kośala, the Buddha displayed his miraculous powers in order to confound the leader of the *Tīrthika* sect. In accordance with the practice of the past Buddhas, he ascended the heaven of the thirtythree gods and preached his Law (Abhidhamma) to his deceased mother and descended to earth at Śāṅkāśya. Rājagṛiha, the capital of Magadha, was the locale of another miracle in which the Buddha tamed the mad elephant, Nālagiri, let loose by his jealous cousin, Devadatta. At Vaiśālī, in a mango-grove, a number of monkeys offered him a bowl of honey.

The above-mentioned eight places, which thus were recognised as the principal Buddhist shrines, cover the prominent cities of the-then North India. These centres, as expected, soon came to be known as the major places of Buddhist pilgrimage. The pious members of the Faith considered it as a meritorious act to pay a visit to these places. In his edicts Aśoka refers to such pilgrimages as *Dhammayātā* or tours of piety. There is inscriptional evidence of Aśoka's personal visit to Lumbinī and Bodhgayā, two of the great four places of pilgrimage. This celebrated emperor erected, at several places, monolithic pillars with inscriptions proclaiming the Law of Piety. Of the several places where Aśokan pillars bearing inscriptions have been found mention should be made of Meerut, Topra, Lumbinī, Nigāli-sāgar, Rāmpurvā, Lauriyā-Nandangarh, Lauriyā-Ararāj, Kauśāmbī, Sāñchī and Sārnāth. The pillars of Meerut and Topra are now in Delhi, and the one at Kauśāmbī is now in Allahabad. The Chinese pilgrims mention many other such pillars which are not extant these days. It is possible that Aśoka erected some of these pillars to commemorate the Buddhist shrines which were very famous during his time.

1. LUMBINI

This ancient site has been identified with Rummindei, District Bhairhwa in the Nepalese Tarai. At this place there exists a pillar of Aśoka proclaiming that the Buddha was born there. This is an indubitable evidence in respect of the identification of the site of Buddha's birth. The inscription in the pillar records that, twenty years after his coronation, Aśoka paid homage in person to the spot where the Buddha was born and that he erected a stone wall round the place as well as a commemorative pillar and exempted the village of Lumbinī from paying taxes except only one-eighth share of the produce. From the accounts of the Chinese traveller Hiuen-tsang, who refers to the site as La-fa-ni grove, it is known that the spot was full of Buddhist monuments indicating its flourishing state as a centre of Buddhist pilgrimage.

Of the antiquarian remains found in this place the foremost is the Aśokan pillar with high polish. But, unfortunately, its top portion is broken now. A number of brick *stūpas* of the votive type and the ruins of a quadrangular monastic establishment with cells are also found at the site. A number of stone and terracotta sculptures belonging to the style prevalent between the second and the tenth centuries have been found from the place. This is an indication of the continuity of the importance of the place as a centre of pilgrimage at least till the tenth century, if not even afterwards.

Another interesting monument at this place is a flat-roofed temple which seems to be a comparatively modern construction on the site of an older one. Here there is the representation, in high relief, of the scene of the nativity of the Buddha. This relief sculpture representing the life-sized form of the mother of the Buddha together with other relevant figures shows the stylistic features of the classical Indian art of the Gupta period.

2. BODHGAYĀ

The holiest of the holy spots associated with Buddhism, Bodhgayā is situated in the District Gayā in Bihar. Aśoka refers to this place as *Sambodhi*, although it is known as Bodhgayā in the later references.

In either way, the name perpetuates the unique event of the Buddha's attainment of Enlightenment (*Bodhi* or *Sambodhi*) at this place. The Tibetan pilgrim Dharmasvāmin, who visited the spot in the thirteenth century, refers to the place as *Vajrāsana* or the Diamond Seat, obviously to indicate the importance of the seat under the pipal tree making the exact spot where the Buddha attained Supreme Wisdom. That the Buddhists attached foremost importance to this place is evident from the fact that devout Buddhists, both of India and of other countries, visited this place for the fulfilment of their lifelong religious aspiration. Several interesting inscriptions have been discovered at this site, according to which, Ceylonese, Burmese and Chinese people visited this place of pilgrimage.

Numerous shrines and monuments were constructed at this place throughout the centuries. The earliest one is perhaps the *Vajrāsana* (Diamond Seat)—the polished sandstone pedestal within the present temple—which Aśoka is supposed to have constructed to commemorate his visit to this place as a pilgrim. On the evidence of a relief on the railing of Bhārhut, Aśoka is known to have constructed a srhrine over the *Vajrāsana;* a railing round it, and the pillar with an elephant capital. These are not to be found in the extant remains at the place.

Another early remnant is represented by the promenade (*Chaṅkama*) which marks the sacred spot where the Buddha spent the third week after his Enlightenment, meditatively walking up and down. What one can see today is a brick platform with representations of lotuses which are believed to have blossomed forth under the footsteps of the Buddha. There is a representation of the covered promenade in the relief sculpture of Bhārhut.

The most important monument of the place is the celebrated Bodhi temple. The Chinese traveller Hiuen-tsang ascribes the construction of this temple to Aśoka. Scholars are of the opinion that the Bodhi temple carved in a Bhārhut relief might represent the one erected by Aśoka. It seems to have consisted of a balustraded gallery enclosing the *Bodhi* Tree, preceded by a column of the type known as the Aśokan column. Although the present form of the temple structure seems to be the result of a number of restorations and renovations through the centuries, it seems likely that the present shape and form of the temple basically is as old as the seventh century A.D., if not older still, as the description of the structure by the Chinese traveller Hiuen-tsang would indicate.

In its present form, the Mahābodhi temple consists of a straight pyramidal tower surmounted by a *stūpa*. This crowning *stūpa* has the *harmikā* and the *hti* with a fluted member of the type of an *āmalaka*. The different stages of the tower are demarcated by *āmalakas* at the corners. The entrance porch, evidently later than the original temple, is on the East. Each of the four sides of the tower shows several tiers of niches, while the front face presents a tall lancet opening for the entrance of light into the sanctum. At the base of the tower, there rises a turret at each of the four corners. These are in the nature of miniature replicas of the main spire. It is interesting to note that the Mahābodhi temple in Burma is a prototype of this temple at Bodhgayā.

The Mahābodhi temple at Bodhgayā enshrines a gilded image of the Buddha in the earth-touching pose (*Bhumisparśa-mudrā*) which symbolizes the dramatic moment in which the Buddha attained Enlightenment. Around the temple there are numerous remains. The most important

of them are portions of the stone railing. The latter belongs to two different periods of construction, the earlier going back to about the second century B.C. and the other to the early Gupta period. The rail posts show interesting carvings of which the figures of Indra as the Brahmin Śānti and of the Sun-god Sūrya drawn by a four-horsed chariot are noteworthy. Numerous other sculptures and beautiful votive *stūpas* found at the spot point to the flourshing nature of this prime centre of Buddhist pilgrimage. Unlike the other centres of North India, it survived the Muslim invasion. The Tibetan monk Dharmasvāmin, who visited this place in the thirteenth century, speaks of the last flicker of survival of the Mahābodhi temple, referred to by him as *Vajrāsana*. Even as late as the fifteenth century, the temple received some sort of royal care for its repairs, as the evidence of the *Pag Sam Jon Zang* would indicate.

3. SĀRNĀTH

The ancient site of Isipatana (Ṛiṣipattana) or (Mṛigadāva) is represented by the present-day Sārnāth in the District of Vārānasī in the Uttar Pradesh. This is the place where Gautama Buddha delivered his First Sermon, the act being known as the turning of the Wheel of Law or *Dharma-Chakra-Pravartana*. Because of this, the place is often referred to as *Dharma-Chakra-Vihāra*, *Sad-dharma-Chakra-Vihara* and *Sad-dharma-Chakra-Pravartana-Vihāra*. In view of the sanctity and importance attached to this place, it continued to be a leading centre of Buddhism throughout the centuries.

Although very little is known of the history of the place during the early years of Buddhism, the place acquired celebrity from the time of Aśoka who erected a series of monuments including a pillar inscribed with an edict warning the resident monks and nuns against creating schisms in the Church. In later periods, two more records were inscribed on this pillar. One of the records belongs to the Kuṣāṇa period and refers to the reign of Aśvaghoṣa, a ruler of Kauśāmabī. The other one, belonging to the early Gupta period, makes a mention of the teachers of the *Sammitīya* sect. Copious accounts of Sārnāth are given by the Chinese travellers Fa-hien and Hiuen-tsang who visited this place in the fifth and seventh centuries A.D. respectively. About the later references to Sārnāth mention may be made of the inscription of 1026 A.D. stating that during the reign of Mahīpāla I of the Pāla dynasty two brothers restored the Dharmarājika *stūpa* and the Dharma-Chakra monastery, both of this place, and constructed a new stone shrine under the name of Gandha-kuṭī. Another inscription, belonging to the twelfth century, states that Kumāradevī, the Buddhist queen of Govindachandra of the Gāhaḍavāla dynasty built a monastery at Sārnāth.

Of the numerous antiquarian remains of Sārnāth, the Aśokan pillar, mentioned above, is the most magnificient. Only the lower portion of the pillar with the edict of the monarch is *in situ* now. The body of the pillar is characterized by shining polish of high order. The famous capital of the pillar, now detached and preserved in the site Museum, consists of four addorsed lions, supported on an abacus over a bell-shaped lower member. It was originally crowned by a wheel, the fragments of which have been recovered from the ruins. In keeping with her age-old tradition of peaceful quest for Truth, the Lion Capital of Sārnāth, complemented with the logo : *Satyameva Jayate* (Truth

Triumphs), has been adopted by the Republic of India as the National Symbol.

To Aśoka is attributed another monument, the Dharmarājika *stūpa*, consisting of a hemispherical dome of brickwork with a terraced drum as the base. The dome was surmounted by umbrellas set within a square railing. That this *stūpa* was subjected to as many as six enlargements during the following centuries, the last one being in the twelfth century, is indicative of the importance that the followers of the faith attached to it.

Of the other important monuments of Sārnāth mention should be made of a shrine, designated as the Main Shrine, the ruins of which have been laid bare by excavation. It is not unlikely that this is the same as the *Mūla-gandha-kuṭī* (chief shrine) referred to in the inscriptions of the Gupta and later periods. It is a massive structure surrounded by a cluster of votive *stūpas*. The exterior plan of the temple assumes the cruciform shape in view of the entrance porch on the East and the three chapels projected from the remaining sides of the temple wall. If this monument is to be identified with the temple described by Hiuen-tsang, the Main Shrine was crowned by an *āmalaka* and it enshrined an image of the Buddha in the preaching pose, as the accounts of the Chinese traveller would indicate.

Most imposing of the ruins at Sārnāth is the Dhāmekh-*stūpa*, situated at the South-east corner of the site. It is a solid structure of cylindrical shape. It's lower portion constituting the drum is built of massive blocks of stone, but the upper part of it is a brick construction. The lower section is relieved by eight projecting bays, each with a large niche originally containing an image. This lower section has a broad band of carved ornamentation of intricate geometric pattern with floral arabesques above and below it. From inside this structure, at a depth of 3 feet from the top, has been found a stone slab with the Buddhist creed inscribed on it in the sixth-seventh century scripts. It is, however, not known when exactly, and with what precise purpose, this *stūpa* was erected.

Outside the main site, there is a lofty mound of brickwork, locally known as the Chaukhaṇḍī. It represents the ruins of a *stūpa* with a terraced basement and an octagonal tower at the top. It is believed to mark the spot where the Buddha, on his way from Gayā to Isipatana, is supposed to have met his five former comrades who were soon to become converts to his Faith. The octagonal tower over the monument, however, is known to be a later addition made during the reign of the Mughal emperor Akbar to commemorate the visit of Humayun to this place.

Sārnāth is equally famous as a great centre of Indian sculptural art. Many excellent pieces of sculpture have been found from this place. Many of them are now preserved in the site museum located nearby. Of these sculptures two should deserve immediate attention in view of their aesthetic charm and art-historical significance. The first one is a colossal image of the Buddha in red standstone. This standing image under a stone umbrella was set up in the promenade (*Chaṅkama*) of the Buddha, in the third year of Kaniṣka, by the monk Bala. The other one represents the seated image of the Buddha in the pose of the turning of the Wheel of Law (*Dharma-Chakra-Pravartana-Mudrā*). This sculpture is important not only because it is an appropriate expression of the incident of the life of the Buddha that Sārnāth perpetuates, but also in view of it being one of the best known examples of Indian plastic art. Both these magnificient

sculptures are now preserved in the local site museum.

4. KUŚĪNAGARA

Kuśīnārā or Kuśīnagara, where the Buddha attained the *Parinirvāṇa* or the unconditioned state, is identified with Kasia, District Deoria in the Uttar Pradesh. The importance of the place was two-fold: the Buddha passed away at this place, and he was also cremated here. To commemorate these incidents two monasteries, *Mahā-Parinirvāṇa-Vihāra* and *Makuṭabandhana-Vihara*, were established here, as known from the seals discovered from this site. These seals bore symbols related to these two events, one showing the coffin of the Buddha between two *Śāla* trees and the other a flaming funeral pyre. Through the centuries, legends and associations of various types grew round the ancient and later monuments and shrines noticed at the site of the *Parinirvāṇa* of the Buddha.

Hiuen-tsang refers to three *stūpas* built by Aśoka at this place. According to him, the emperor also erected two pillars with inscriptions recording the *Parinirvāṇa* of the Buddha and the distribution of the relics and marking the spots where these events took place. The other Chinese traveller, I-tsing, refers to the Pan-da-na monastery which seems to be the same as the *Makuṭabandhana-Vihāra* situated on the spot of the cremation of the Buddha.

Of the extant remains of the monuments and shrines at the site, attention is immediately drawn to the *Nirvāṇa-Chaitya* and the Nirvāṇa-shrine—the *stūpa* and the temple in front—both on the same platform. On the evidence of archaeological finds, including a silver coin of Kumāragupta (415-55 A.D.) and a copper plate in Gupta characters, these two edifices seem to belong to the Gupta period. But they seem to have been built on earlier remains as revealed during the excavation. The *stūpa* had a cylindrical base and in its inside there was a circular brick chamber containing items of various types including the silver coin and copper plate, mentioned above. The shrine houses a colossal image of the Buddha in sandstone. The image represents the Buddha lying in state on a brick pedestal. Three mourning figures are also represented. There is an inscription claiming the image to be a gift of Haribala, the chief of the great monastery (*Mahāvihāra-Svāmin*). It is significant that Haribala, probably the same person, is also mentioned in the copper-plate referred to above.

The *Nirvāṇa-Chaitya* was thoroughly overhauled in 1927 and the shrine attached to it was restored and rebuilt twice, once in 1876 and then in 1956.

The votive *stūpas*, monasteries and miscellaneous buildings and images noticed in and around the site are many in number. As many as eight monasteries, belonging to the period between the first and the tenth centuries A.D., have come to light due to excavations. Mention should also be made of the find of many sealings and clay tablets recording the usual Buddhist creed. A little away from the main site, to the East and South-west respectively, are noticed a mound-like *stūpa*, locally known as *Rāmābhār-stūpa*, and a seated stone image of the Buddha, locally known as *Maṭha-kuār*. The former is believed to represent the spot of the cremation of the Buddha. The image of the Buddha in the earth-touching pose (*Bhūmi-sparśa-mudrā*) seems to be housed originally in a chapel which was built according to an inscription, during the reign of a local Kalachuri chief in about the tenth century A.D.

5. ŚRĀVASTĪ

The ancient site of Śrāvastī is identified with the present-day villages, Saheth and Maheth, in the Gonda and Bahraich Districts respectively of the Uttar Pradesh. This was the capital of the ancient kingdom of Kośala. The importance of this place in the Buddhist lore is manifold. Here the Buddha displayed his great miracle in front of an audience consisting of Prasenajit, the king of Kośala. In order to confound the Tīrthikas and to establish his supermacy, the Buddha displayed the multiplied forms of himself going upto the highest heaven. This was a unique feat performed by the Buddha and, as the locale of this unprecedented event, Śrāvastī acquired foremost celebrity. It was here that the merchant Anāthapiṇḍika, a staunch follower of the Buddha, built a splendid monastery in the park of prince Jeta after paying the latter as many gold coins as would cover the ground, and donated the *Jetavana-Vihāra* to the Buddha. Another important event that took place at Śrāvastī is the conversion of the notorious robber Aṅgulimāla, who used to kill people and cut a finger off each person for a garland. All these three major events, viz., the miracle of the multiplication of himself by the Buddha, the donation of the *Jetavana-Vihara* to the Buddha by the merchant Anāthapiṇḍika, and the conversion of the robber Aṅgulimāla, are depicted in the relief sculptures of the early Buddhist schools.

Śrāvastī, particularly the *Jetavana-Vihāra*, was a favourite resort of the Buddha. He spent the largest number of *Varṣās* (Summers) here and delivered many of his important sermons. According to the Buddhist work *Divyāvadāna*, Aśoka visited the Jetavana and worshipped the *stūpas* there. The Ceylonese text *Mahāvaṁśa* mentions that the emperor did go to Ceylon from the Jetavana monastery. At this place the Chinese pilgrim Hiuen-tsang saw two pillars of Aśoka, one crowned by a wheel and other by an ox, and also a *stūpa*, with the relics of the Buddha, built by Aśoka.

When Fa-hien visited the place in the fifth century, things were already in the ruins, and, in the seventh century, Hiuen-tsang saw most of the buildings in decay. But that the activity continued till the twelfth century is borne but by the discovery of many Buddhist images, some with inscriptions. One inscription of the period, dated 1119 A.D., speaks of the foundation of a monastery and another record, a copper plate charter, dated 1130 A.D., records the grant of villages to it.

Of the antiquarian remains of Śrāvastī, the most notable are the remnants of the *Jetavana* which lie within an irregular enclosure-wall. These include a number of *stūpas*, monasteries and temples. The *stūpas* belong mostly to the Kuṣāṇa period, some of them containing Kuṣāṇa inscriptions. The temples belong generally to the Gupta style, a few only showing features of a later date in the tenth century. The monasteries show the plan of Buddhist structures of the early medieval period

Many images of Buddhist deities, mostly of the medieval style, have been found from Śrāvastī. But the most notable of the sculptures hailing from the site is the image of the Kuṣāṇa-Mathurā workshop set up on the promenade of the Buddha by the friar Bala, who is known to have dedicated another image at Sārnāth, in the reign of the Kuṣāṇa ruler Kaṇiṣka.

6. RĀJAGṚIHA

Rājagṛiha, the ancient capital of Magadha (South Bihar), was one of the sixteen great

cities (*Mahājanapadas*) of India during the time of the Buddha. Its ruler Bimbisāra was an ardent supporter of the Buddha. Although Ajātaśatru, the son of this emperor, was not initially favourably disposed to the Buddha, he too is known to have been drawn towards him at a later stage.

Rājagṛiha was a favourite place of the Buddha. He spent many years of his life propagating his message here. It is also famous in view of it being the place where the Buddha performed the well-known miracle of the taming of the mad elephant Nālagiri let loose at him by his jealous cousin Devadatta. Even after the death of the Buddha, the place was regarded with equal importance. The first Buddhist Council was held here to canonize the Buddha's scattered sayings relating to the Law and the Code of Conduct for the Order.

Ajātaśatru is known to have built here a *stūpa* over his share of the relics of the Buddha. Soon afterwards, the First Buddhist Council was held in the *Saptaparṇī* cave, identified with a group of natural caves on the Northern scarp of the Vaibhāra hill. Two centuries later, Aśoka is known to have erected a *stūpa* and a pillar with an elephant-capital. The Chinese travellers Fa-hien and Hiuen-tsang visited Rājagṛiha in the fifth and seventh centuries respectively. Even as late as the thirteenth century, the Tibetan monk Dharmasvāmin refers to the *Gṛidhrakūṭa* (vulture's peak), a favourite resort of the Buddha, identified as a place on the Chhatha hill approached by a stone-laid path believed to have been built by Bimbisāra. Mention of the *Gṛidhrakūṭa* could be found in the inscribed labels of Nepalese miniatures dated A.D. 1015 and 1017.

Of the other traditional sites in this place, mention should be made of the bamboo-grove (*Veṇuvana*) monastery and the mango-grove monastery built by the famous physician Jīvaka. The former has been identified with a mound to the south of the present-day Inspection Bunglow. Recent excavations have brought to light the enclosure wall together with foundations of a few large elliptical halls and subsidiary oblong rooms, all built of rubble, in the South-eastern corner of the hill-girt valley. These have been identified by scholars as the ruins of the celebrated mango grove (Āmravana) of the Physician Jīvaka.

Of the several other monuments of the place two deserve mention. A remarkable structure, known as *Jarāsandh-ki-Baiṭhak*, on the eastern slope of the Vaibhāra hill, with irregular cells at the sides, has been identified by some with the residence of Mahākāśyapa, the organizer of the First Buddhist Council. The other one is the cylindrical brick shrine, known as the *Maṇiyār Maṭh*, which, according to the local tradition, was dedicated to the worship of Maṇi-nāga, the guardian deity of the city of Rājagṛiha. At Giriyak, situated on the outer face of the eastern hills of Rajgir, there is a cylindrical brick *stūpa* of huge dimensions.

7. ŚĀṄKĀŚYA

This place is identified with the present-day Sankissa, District Farrukhabad in the Uttar Pradesh. It is a very sacred place to the Buddhists because, according to the tradition, it was from this place that the Buddha ascended the heaven of the thirtythree gods in order to meet his deceased mother and to deliver to her the message of the Law (*Abhidhamma*). After the completion of this mission, the Buddha is known to have descended to the earth again at the same spot. According to the Buddhist legend, the Lord came down by a triple ladder, accompanied by the gods,

Śakra and Brahmā. This incident forms a favourite motif in the art of Buddhism.

In view of this sacred association, Śāṅkāśya acquired the status of a place of Buddhist pilgrimage. During the flourishing days of Buddhism, many *stūpas*, monasteries, and shrines were erected here to mark the sanctity of the place. The Chinese travellers Fa-hien and Hiuen-tsang, who visited the place in the fifth and seventh centuries respectively, left interesting accounts of the important monuments. But the extant remains are represented by an earthen rampart and a few mounds scattered throughout. These are too fragmentary to give the picture of things that existed in the hey days of the site. The elephant capital of the Aśokan column, which was once situated at Śāṅkāśya, is a testimony of the importance of the place even in third century B.C.

8. VAIŚĀLĪ

The ancient site of Vaiśālī has been identified with modern Basarh, District Muzaffarpur in Bihar. In the Buddhist tradition, Vaiśālī is a sacred place primarily for two reasons: it was here that the miracle in the nature of offering of a bowlful of honey to the Buddha by the monkeys took place; again, it was here that the Lichchhavis erected a *stūpa* over their share of the relics of the Buddha after the *Parinirvāṇa* of the latter. At Vaiśālī the Buddha announced his ensuing *Parinirvāṇa*. Thus, it was the place where the Buddha stayed before undertaking his last journey to Kuśinagara. According to the tradition, the Buddha received the gift of the mango-grove from the courtesan Āmrapālī at Vaiśālī. It was at Vaiśālī that the Second Buddhist Council was held about a century after the death of the Buddha. This Council was held in connection with the ten rules of discipline adopted by the monks of the eastern regions against the protest of the westerners. This led to the split of the Buddhist Church into two camps : the easterners were known to be the *Mahāsāṅghikas* or the progressives, and the westerners came to be known as the *Theravādins* or the orthodox.

At Kolhua, about 2 miles north-west, there is a pillar with a lotus capital surmounted by a lion. Although there is no inscription on it, its design and craftsmanship are of the type of Aśokan pillars. Nearby have been discovered the ruins of a few *stūpas* including one in the form of a very old mud structure with *āyaka*-like projections at four directions. Some of these structures might represent the remnants of the two *stūpas* that Aśoka is known to have built at Vaiśālī, one with the relics of the original *stūpa* that the Lichchhavis built and the other that the emperor built to commemorate his visit to this place of Buddhist pilgrimage.

From Amarāvatī has been discovered an inscribed stele of the second century B.C. It shows a *Chaitya-Vṛikṣa* (sacred tree) serving as a sanctuary. The inscribed label reveals its identification as a shrine of Vaiśālī. That numerous shrines existed at Vaiśālī is known from the accounts of the Chinese travellers Fa-hien and Hiuen-tsang. A Nepalese manuscript of the eleventh century shows the illustration of the temple-shrine of the goddess Tārā of the Buddhists, as revealed through its inscribed label. The Tibetan monk Dharmasvāmin, who visited Vaiśālī in the thriteenth century, refers to a miraculous stone image of the goddess Tārā that he had seen at Vaiśālī.

The site of *Rājā Biśāl Kā Gaḍh* is believed to represent the citadel of Vaiśālī. It consists of a large brick mound which, after diggings, has exposed the foundations of

old buildings of irregular plans. These may go back to the Gupta period. Here also have been found a large number of clay seals bearing the names of individuals or guilds of merchants, bankers and traders. Another shrine that deserves mention is the small tank, known as Rāma Kuṇḍa. This has been identified with the ancient *Markaṭa-Kuṇḍa* (Monkey's tank), believed to have been dug by the monkeys for the use of the Buddha.

Chapter Three

Indian Buddhist Shrines

IN the course of the spread of Buddhism in India, several other sites rose into prominence. Many of these sites are not associated with the life and legend of the Buddha, but numerous sacred shrines, *stūpas* and monasteries were erected at these places, sometimes by the ruling monarchs and at others by the pious followers of the Faith. Some of these shrines have acquired name and fame going beyond the boundaries of the country and attracted people, irrespective of their faith and following, to visit these places. In some cases, the grandeur of the art and architecture of the shrines drew their attention, at others their sanctity due to Buddhistic association or importance as centres of cultural activity was the reason behind the attraction. In fact, numerous such sites are known from the Indian sub-Continent, and the archaeologists have been adding regularly to the list of the names of Buddhist shrines.

It is almost impossible to mention, all these sites, not to speak of taking their descriptive note. We have, therefore, to be selective. The sites of historical or art-historical imprortance will only be taken note of here. For the detailed and specialized study, one can take the help of the books given in the reading list.

The shrines will be taken note of in terms of their zonal distribution. The division of India into five zonal units, viz., Northern, Western, Central, Eastern and Southern, was necessary for this purpose. In the Northern zone, the shrines of Kashmir, Punjab and Haryana have been included. The geographical limit for the Western zone has been kept quite wide—it includes Rajasthan, Gujarat, and Maharashtra. The two large provinces—Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh—have been referred to as the Central zone. In the Southern zone, the shrines of Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Mysore and Kerala have been included. The Eastern zone comprises of Bihar, Bengal, Orissa and Assam. It has to be mentioned that the shrines situated in Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal have been dealt with separately in the next chapter.

NORTHERN ZONE

Like many other centres of Buddhism, Kashmir is indebted to the Maurya ruler Aśoka who is known to have introduced Buddhism into this land. He is known to have built a few *stūpas* in Kashmir. This is attested to by the seventh-century Chinese pilgrim Hiuen-tsang and by the twelfth-century chronicler of Kashmir, Kalhaṇa, in his *Rājataraṅgiṇī*. During the reign of the Kuṣāṇa ruler Kaṇiṣka, the Fourth Buddhist Council was held in Kashmir. The land thereafter became an important centre of Buddhist Culture and received patronage of rulers and their queens in the establishment of *stūpas* and *Vihāras* and in the consecration of Buddhist images. Among the many such patrons mention should be made of Lalitāditya

Muktāpīḍa and Jayāpīḍa of the Kārkoṭa dynasty, and of Diddā, queen of Uchchhala. With the royal patronage, Kashmir became an important centre of Sanskrit Buddhist learning, as is evident from the find of the Gilgit manuscripts belonging to the sixth or seventh century A.D.

In Kashmir, a number of important centres of Buddhist culture could be found. Prominent among them are Pandrethan and Harwan in the Srinagar District, Ushkura and Paraspora in the Baramulla District, Malangpur in the Anantnag District and Naupur near Gilgit Cantonment.

Pandrethan represents the original site of Śrīnagarī, the capital of Kashmir, founded by Aśoka. When, later, the present city of Srinagar was established, the original site came to be known as Purāṇādhiṣṭhāna or Pandrethan, meaning the old capital. Of the Buddhist edifices noticed in this place, mention should be made of the two *stūpas* situated within a compound wall. Although these *stūpas* are in their ruins, the cruciform ground-plan of one of them and the sculptural embelishments on the drum are noteworthy. The most important of the shrines of Harwan, identified with Ṣaḍ-arhatvana (the grove of six saints), the residence of the Buddhist teacher Nāgārjuna, is an apsidal structure with a courtyard covered with moulded terracotta tiles decorated with patterns in low relief. At the back of the courtyard there is a long platform faced with terracotta tiles depicting a frieze of emaciated seated ascetics. The Chinese pilgrim Hiuen-tsang refers to a flourishing Buddhist establishment of Hushkapura identified with the present-day Ushkura. But whatever remains of the ancient glory could be noticed today is represented by the *stūpa* with cruciform base which was probably built by Lalitāditya Muktāpīḍa, the celebrated ruler of the Kārkoṭa dynasty of Kashmir. Parihāsapura, the ancient capital of this ruler, is represented by the present-day Paraspora. From here a number of important Buddhist shrines have come to light. They include a *stūpa*, a monastery and a temple. A *stūpa*, again, is the important Buddhist shrine at Malangpur. The importance of Gilgit is, however, for the Sanskrit Buddhist manuscripts of sixth-seventh centuries found inside the *stūpa*.

Of the Buddhist shrines of the Indian part of the Punjab mention should be made of the recently discovered site of Sanghol in the Samrala Tehsil of the Ludhiana District. The ancient name of the place was perhaps Saṅghālaya, meaning the abode of the (Buddhist) Saṅgha or Church. It is probably the same as *She-to-tu-lo* of Hiuen-tsang where the latter saw about ten monasteries. At Sanghol have been discovered the ruins of a few monastic establishments and of a *stūpa* with the inner composition in the form of the Buddhist Wheel of Law (*Dharma-Chakra*).

WESTERN ZONE

The antiquity of Buddhist shrines in Rajasthan goes back to the days of Aśoka. Two of his edicts are found at Bairat in the District Jaipur. Even Hiuen-tsang mentions the existence of eight ruined monasteries at *Po-li-ye-ta-to*, commonly identified with Bairat. But the foremest fame of Rajasthan in the annals of Buddhist shrines is due to the rock-cut caves at Kolvi, Binnayaga and Hadiagor—all in the District Jhalawar. These caves, belonging to the sixth-seventh centuries, seem to be the offshoots of the same Buddhist movement which produced the caves at Dhamnar in Madhya Pradesh. In these caves, the Buddha has been represented

in the relief sculptures. But the overall character of the caves suggests that they belonged probably to the Buddhists of the Hīnayāna order.

At Kolvi, as many as forty-five caves have been exposed. In addition, a number of free-standing *stūpas* have also come to light. The caves are mostly of the type of the usual rectangular monastery with residential cells some of which are provided with raised rock-cut beds. Two of the caves show double-storeyed type of the monastic establishment. Interestingly, there are three *stūpa*-shaped sanctuaries of a novel design in these caves. There is also one example of a *Chaitya-gṛiha* of the traditional form and design. The free-standing *stūpas* represent an evolved form with a tower-like appearance.

About twenty caves have so far been exposed at Binnayaga. These are smaller than the ones at Kolvi. But they also pertain more or less to the same type of formulation of the monastic establishment and *stūpa*-shaped sanctuaries. Moreover, here too one can see similar type of rock-cut *stūpas*.

The Rock-edict of Aśoka at Junagadh in Gujarat is perhaps the earliest document of the spread of Buddhism there. At Intwa near Girnar has been discovered the ruins of a monastery which has been identified, on the basis of the legend on a sealing, as the one built by the Śaka-Satrap Rudrasena I who ruled between 199 and 222 A.D. At Valabhī, modern Vala in the District Bavnagar, there evolved, during the rule of the Maitraka rulers, the celebrated Buddhist educational centre which acquired fame almost equal to that of Nālandā. According to Hiuen-tsang, at Valabhī there were one hundred convents and more than six thousand devotees of the Sammitīya School. About thirty Copper-plate inscriptions, of the seventh and eighth centuries A.D., found here record that land grants were given by the Maitraka rulers of Valabhī to about fifteen monasteries built by the members of the royal family and by their officers and Buddhist saints. Unfortunately, from the present ruins at the site, nothing can be known about its past glory.

Of the other Buddhist centres of Gujarat mention should be made of Kampilya near Navasari where existed the *Kampilya-tīrthakīya-vihāra* known from two copper-plate charters of Dantivarman and Dhruva Dhārāvarṣa of the Gujarat Branch of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa dynasty. Another important centre of Buddhist shrine is Devnimori in the District Sabar-Kantha. A towering *stūpa*, two monasteries, an apsidal temple and a few votive *stūpas* are some of the important monuments discovered here. Most interesting and important is the towering *stūpa* inside which has been discovered a stone casket with a prākṛit inscription on its lid and a Sanskrit inscription on the body. The former pertains to a Buddhist text relevant to the enshrinement within *stūpas*. But the Sanskrit inscription records that the *Mahāstūpa* was constructed in the precincts of the *Mahāvihāra* during the rule of King Rudrasena (presumably Rudrasena III of the Kṣatrapa dynasty) in the year 127 of the Kathika rulers (the date, if referred to the Kalachurī-Chedī era, comes to 375 A.D.) As many as twenty-six terracotta figures of the Buddha, all in the *dhyāna-mudrā*, have been found on the ornate arches relieved on the bays of the upper platform of the *stūpa*. They have added new dimension to the history of Indian plastic art.

In connection with the Buddhist shrines in Gujarat, mention should be made of the Buddhist caves noticed at places like Sana in the Junagadh District, and Talaya in the District Bhavnagar. At both these

places, and also at Dhank, thirty miles north-west of Junagadh and seven miles south-east of Porbandar, one comes across a number of Buddhist caves marked by austere simplicity and showing the traditional formulations of monastic establishments and *stūpas*.

It is interesting to note that a Buddhist manuscript, dated 1015 A.D., now preserved in the Cambridge University Library, illustrates Tārā of Tārapura, Kurukullā of Kurukullā-śikhara and Chundā of Vuṅkāranagara—all in Lāṭadeśa or Southern Gujarat.

Mahārāṣṭra was perhaps the most flourishing centre of Buddhism in the Western zone. Its importance is indicated not only by the discovery of the fragments of the Eighth and Ninth Rock Edicts of Aśoka at Sopara in the District Thana, but also by the glowing tributes paid by Hiuen-tsang to the prosperity of Buddhism in the Konkan and Mahārāṣṭra regions. In fact, the fame of the region is due largely to the numerous centres of Buddhist caves of the rock-cut formation. The rock-cut *Chaitya-gṛihas* and *Vihāras* of various shapes and form to be seen at places like Bhaja, Bedsa, Karla and Junnar, (all in District Poona), Kondane (District Kolaba), Kondivte and Kanheri (both in District Bombay Suburban), Pitalkhora, Ajanta and Ellora (all in the District Aurangabad) and Nasik (District Nasik) are glorious testimony to the flourishing character of Buddhist shrines during the period between the second century B.C. and the eighth century A.D.—the earliest phase represented by the *Chaitya* cave at Bhaja and the latest one by the Buddhist caves of Ellora. All these places are honeycombed with numerous caves carved in the form of *Chaitya-gṛiha*, *Vihāra* or similar other edifices. Rock-cut *stūpas*, either inside or outside these establishments, can also be seen. The *Chaitya-gṛihas*, which follow the wooden prototypes in earlier examples, show usually a rectangular hall with an apsidal end, divided into a central nave and two side aisles by means of a series of pillars going round a *stūpa* situated at the apse. These halls usually show a vaulted ceiling. The caves showing the formulation of a *vihāra* or a monastery are conspicuous by the presence of monastic cells arranged in various compositional permutations and combinations. The major points of variation between the architectural character of one rock-cut cave and that of the other lie in their respective facades and the number and type of the pillars or the cells, as might be the case. The shape and form of the *Chaitya* window in the facade and also the typological and numerical variations of the pillars and cells have been regarded as the important determinants for the chronological and the stylistic sequence of the caves.

Apart from the rock-cut caves, a few examples of structural shrines of Buddhism are also known from Mahārāṣṭra, of these mention should first be made of the well-known apsidal temple at Ter in the District Osmanabad. Moreover, from a place called Pauni in the District Bhandara have been discovered fragments of uprights and coping stones of a *stūpa*. The inscription on these fragments could be placed to the second century B.C., on palaeographic considerations.

Of the rock-cut caves in Western India, the name of Bhaja comes first in view of its chronological priority. The other extreme point is represented by the *Chaitya*-shrine at Karla which is the largest and the most complete of its class and design on a magnificient scale. In one of the early inscriptions on its walls, it has rightly been described as the "most

excellent rock-cut mansion in Jambudvipa" (India). On stylistic and palaeographic considerations, this shrine is attributed to the beginning of the second century A.D. Pitalkhora, which probably represents the ancient Pitaṅgalya of the Buddhist Text *Mahāmāyūrī*, seems to be as early as the first century B.C., as the palaeography of the dedicatory inscriptions would indicate. But the caves seem to have been in use till as late as the seventh century A.D., as could be presumed from the existence, on some of the pillars, of the evidence of faded paintings, with a few painted records, in the style of the late murals of Ajanta.

The most important and imposing of the rock-cut caves can be found at Ajanta where there are as many as thirty of them, including the unfinished ones. Of these, five (caves Nos. 9, 10, 19, 26 and 29) are *Chaitya-gṛihas* and the rest monasteries. The establishment seems to have its beginning in the second century B.C. and continued its existence possibly till as late as the ninth century A.D. The earliest limit is indicated by the palaeography of three short inscriptions in the cave No. 10. But the most magnificient phase of the artistic activity here seems to have come in the fifth century. Cave No. 16, one of the most beautiful monasteries of Ajanta, was the gift of Varāhadeva, a minister of king Hariṣeṇa (circa 575-500 A.D.) of the Vākāṭaka dynasty which was matrimonially connected with the Guptas. Cave No. 17, an equally imposing monastery, is known to have one of the feudatories of Hariṣeṇa as the patron.

Thus the caves of Ajanta may be broadly dividided into two groups : the early group comprising of caves Nos. 8-10, 12, 13 and 15A, and the later phase being represented by all others. Apart from the architectural and sculptural grandeur of Ajanta caves, their importance lies in the beautiful paintings that they preserve. These paintings not only give a glimpse of the early tradition of Indian mural paintings, they also show the excellence that this art reached at in the golden age of the Guptas. Important examples of painting, in various states of preservation, could be seen in caves Nos. 1, 2, 9, 10, 16 and 17. The *Chaitya*-shrines at Ajanta are examples of the maturity that this form of architecture acquired during the period. The monasteries show varied form and size with distinctive features in almost all of them. Cave No. 6 shows a double-storeyed form.

The caves at Aurangabad, datable to the sixth-seventh century A.D., are more important for the sculptural treasures than their architectural novelty. Not far from this place are situated the cave-shrines of Ellora. These caves sprang up in the reign of Early Western Chālukyas (sixth to the eighth centuries A.D.) through the early part of the reign of their supplanters, the Rāṣṭrakūṭas. These caves belong to the Buddhist, Brahmanical and Jaina faiths. The Southern group, consisting of twelve caves, is devoted to Buddhism. They show not only varied elements of architectural novelty, but also excellence in the art of sculpture. Most of the caves were orginally painted, but now only traces of them remain. These paintings, however, are not in any way equal to the examples at Ajanta. But their importance lies in that they are indicative of a change that the art was destined to.

SOUTHERN ZONE

The Minor Rock Edicts of Aśoka at places like Maski, Gavimath, Palkigundu in the District Raichur and at Brahmagiri, Jatingi—Ramesvara and Siddapur in the District Chitaldurg in Mysore and at

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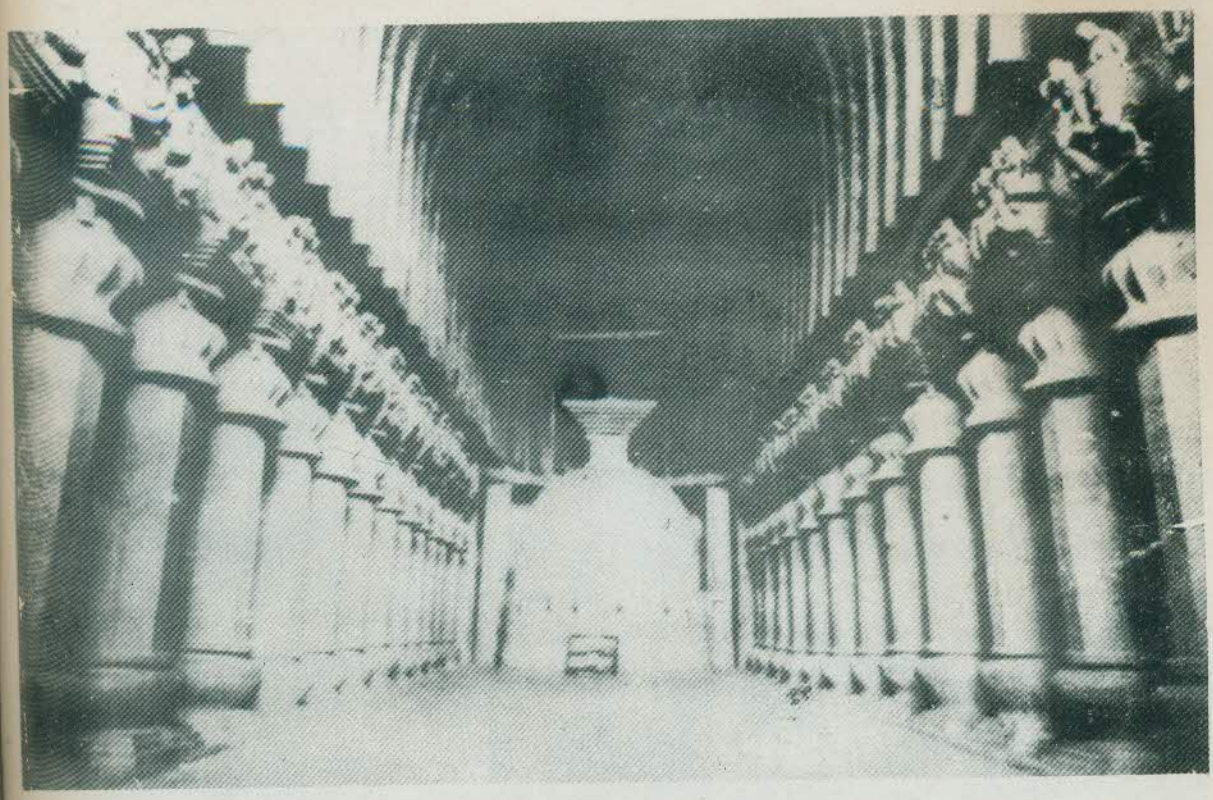
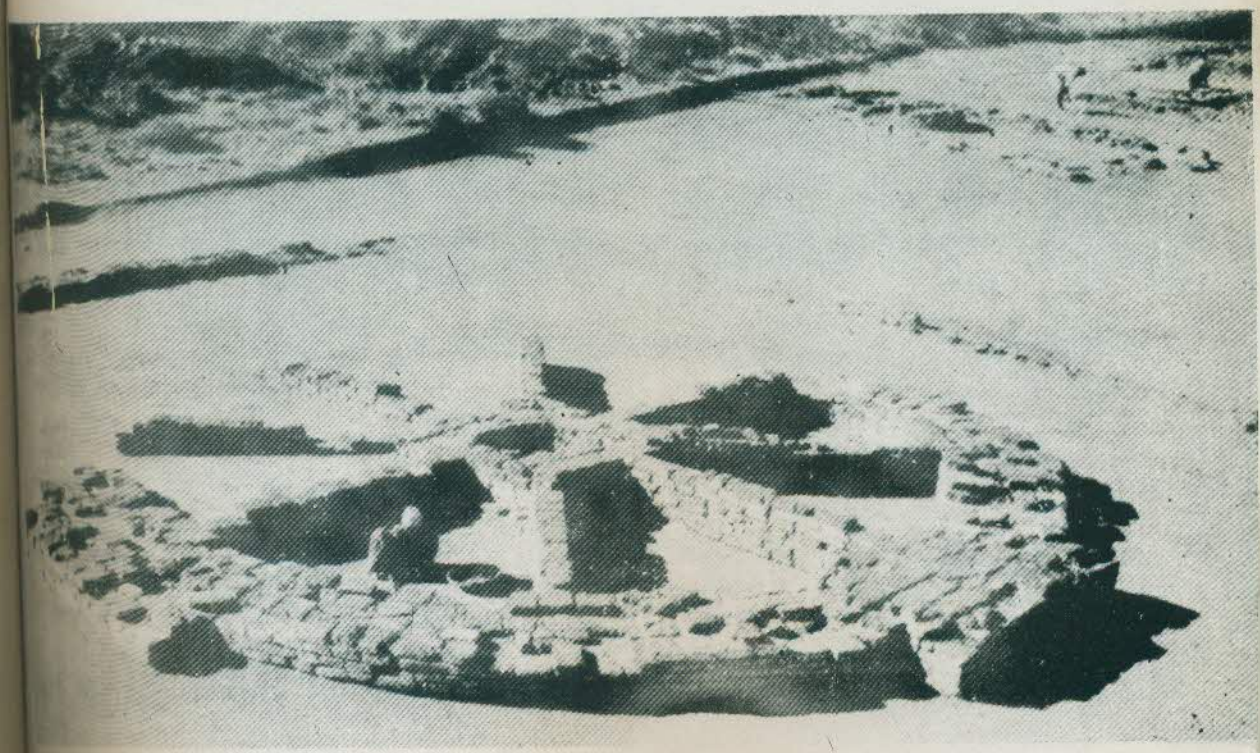


Interior of Karle cave

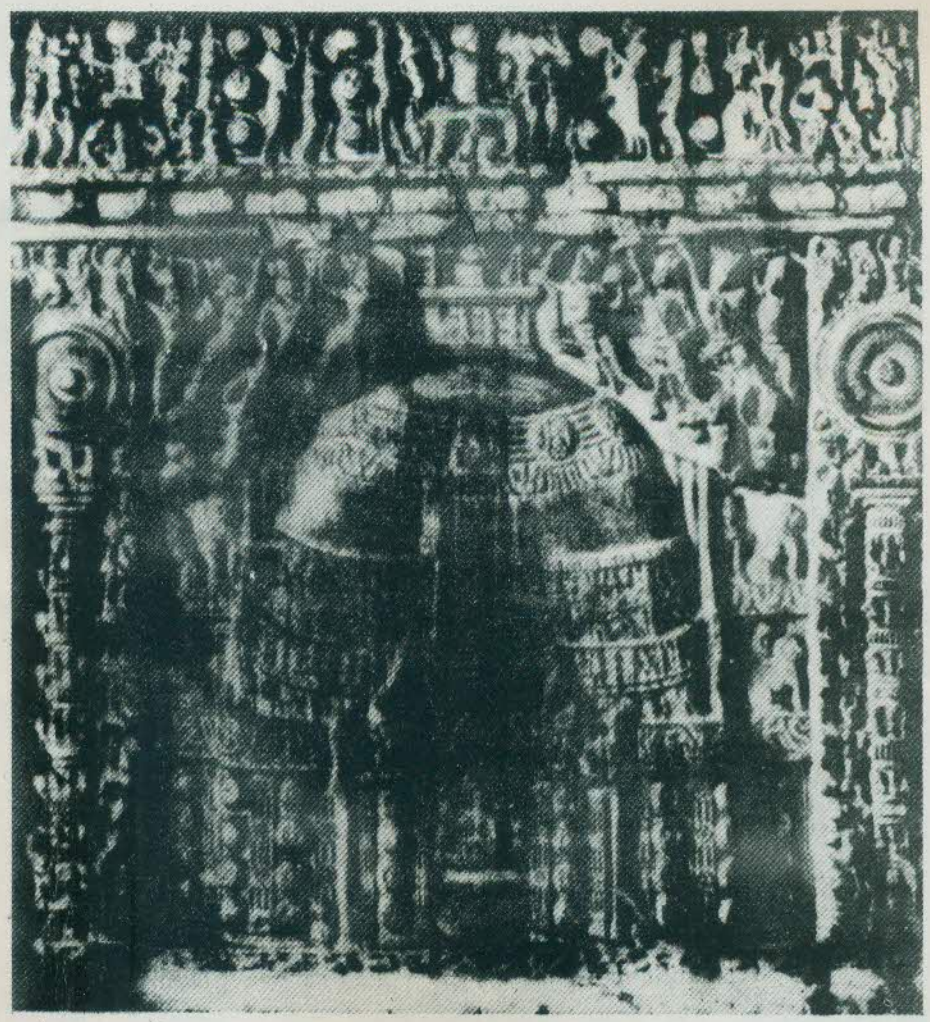


Nagarjunakonda—eight spoked Stupa

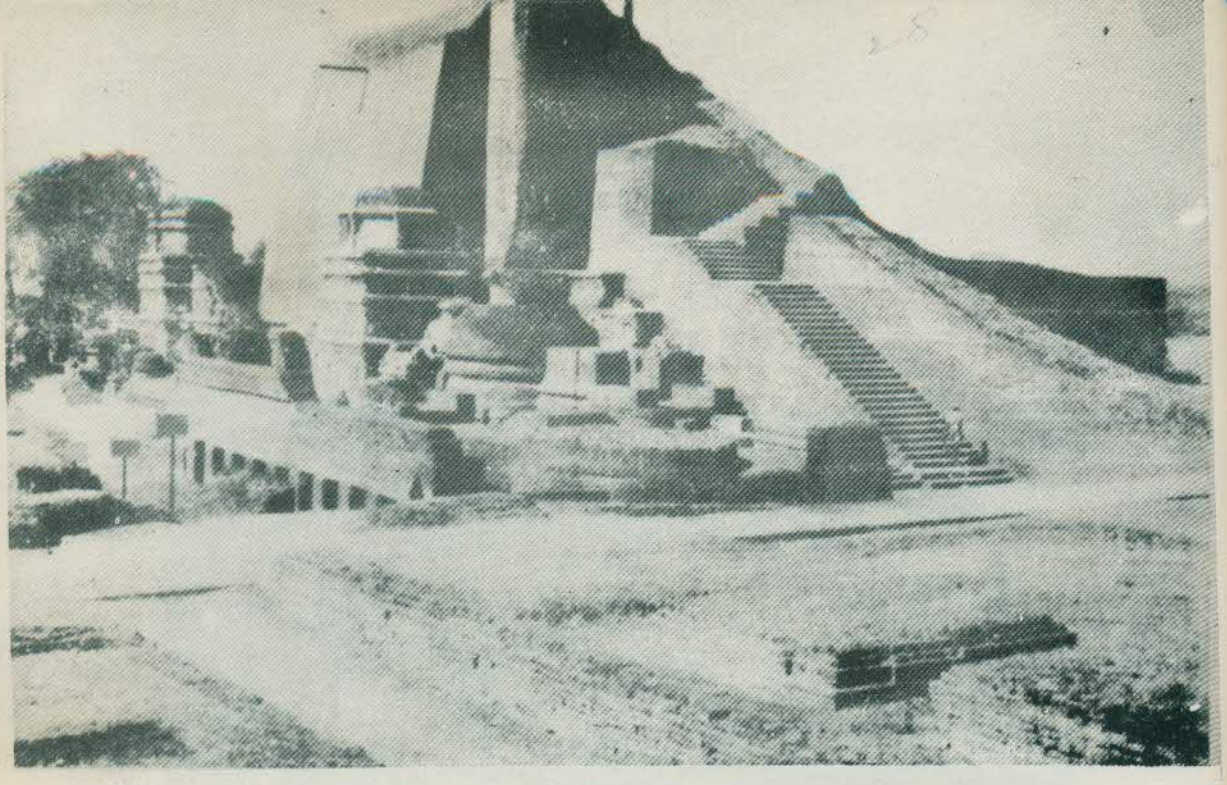
Nagarjunakonda Stadium

Nagarjunakonda—a multi-pillared monastery

Nagarjunakonda—Stupa Slab



Caitya slab showing a stupa, Amravati

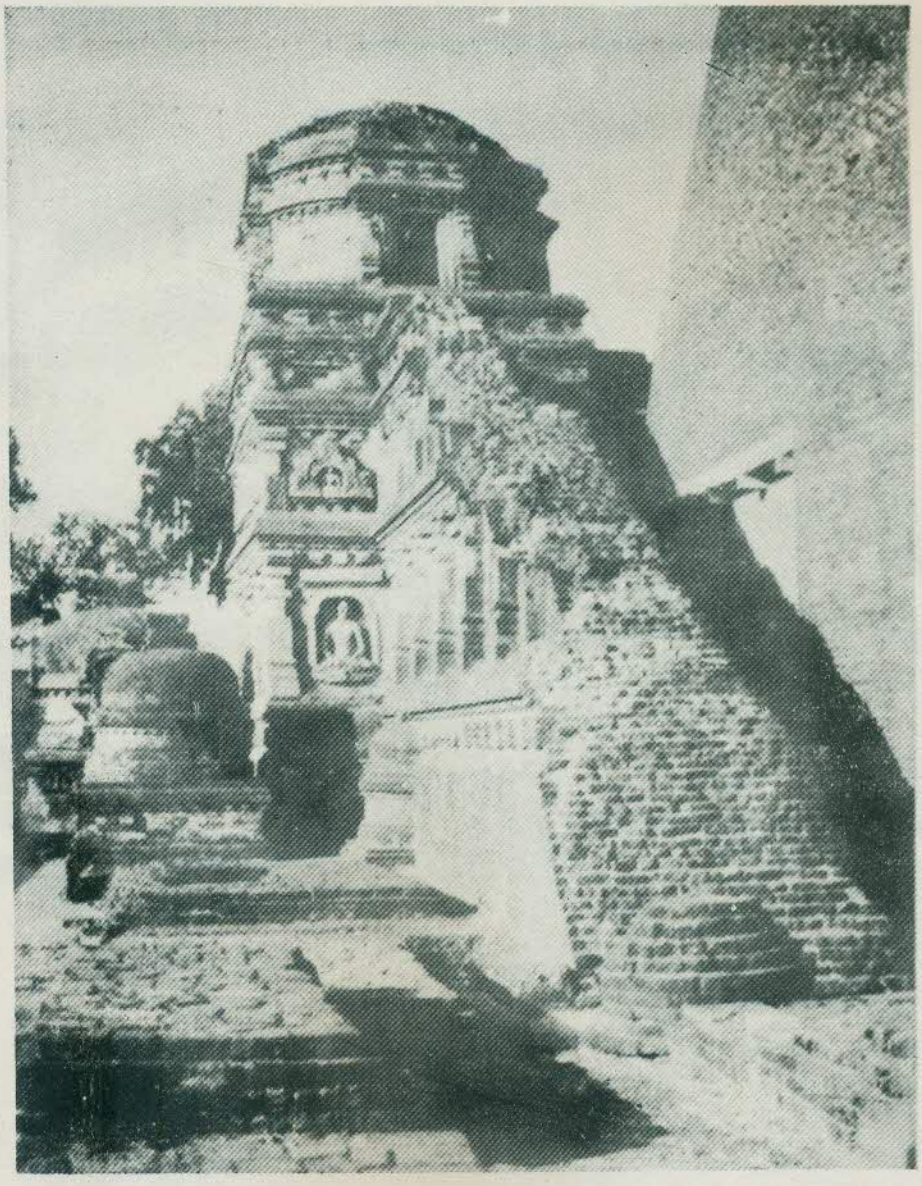


Nalanda—General view of Stupa.

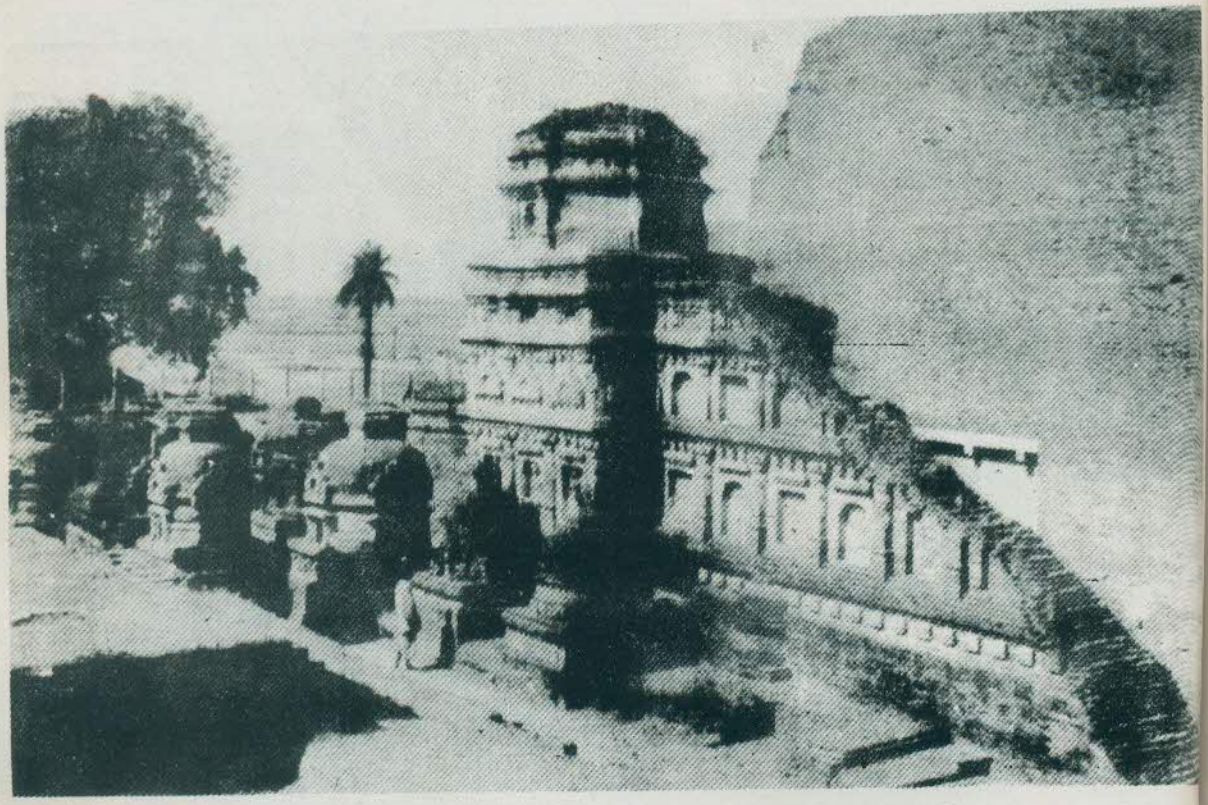
Carved portion of Stupa, Nalanda

Nalanda—General view of Stupa.

Carved portion of Stupa, Nalanda



Nalanda—Southern Corner tower of temple Site No. 3

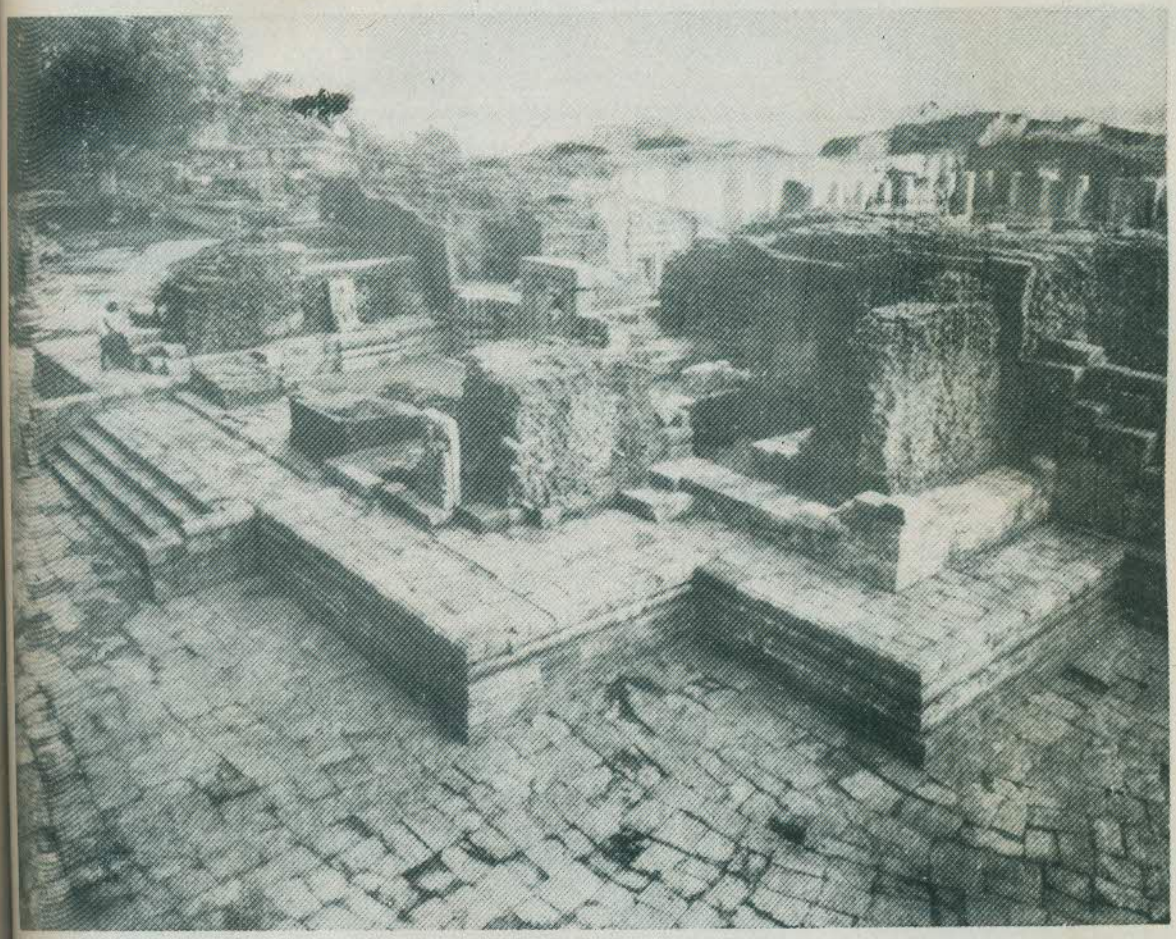


Nalanda—Corner tower and ***stupa*** *attached to the main Stupa*

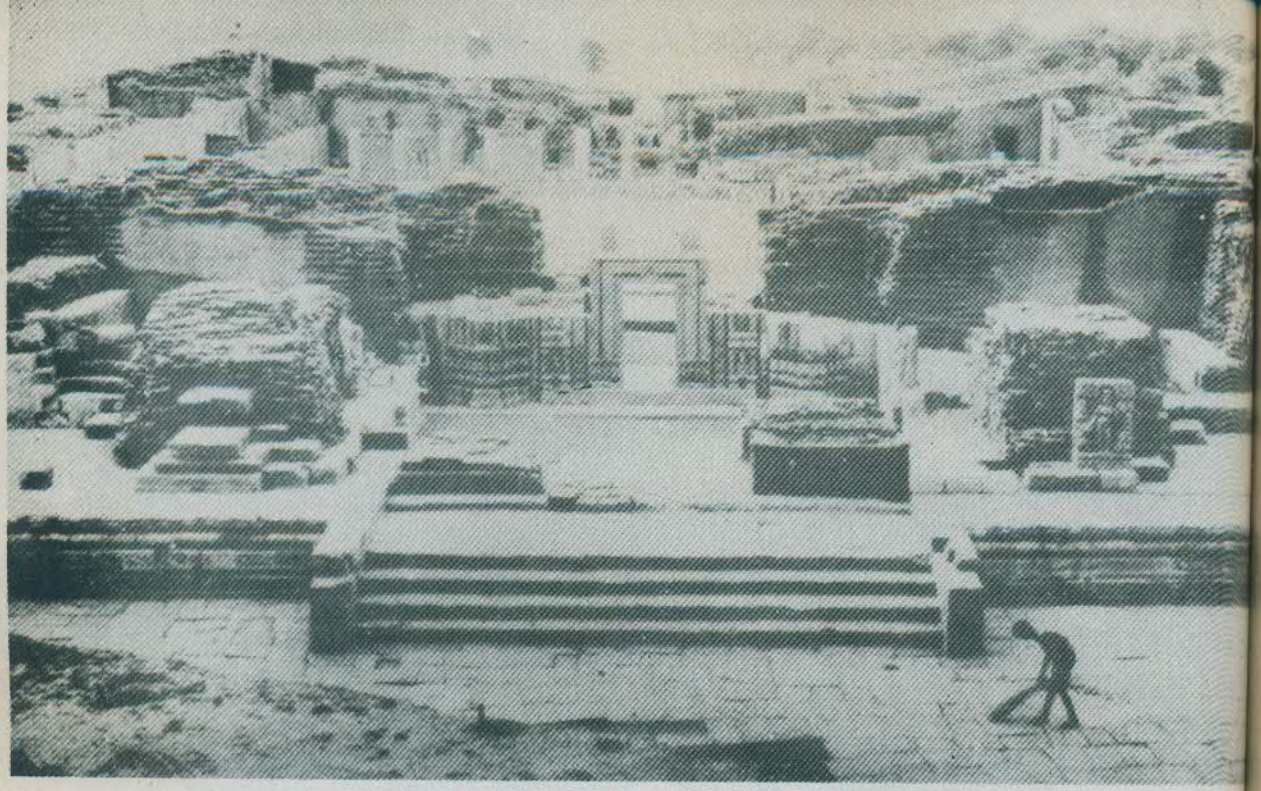
main Stupa

Facade of Ajanta cave

Mahabodhi temple, Bodhgaya



Ratnagiri—entrance to the monastery



Ratnagiri—General view of the monastery

Dharmarajika Stupa, Taksasila

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Rajula-Mandagiri and Yerragundi in the District Kurnool in Andhra Pradesh are testimony to the Buddhist influence in the South even as early as the third century B.C. Subsequently, numerous centres of Buddhist shrines came into being through the centuries. Of these, Nāgapaṭṭinam in the District Thanjavur in Tamil Nadu and Amarāvatī, Nāgārjunikoṇḍā, Goli and Bhaṭṭipralu in the District Guntur and Jaggayyapeṭā and Ghaṇṭāśāla in the District Krishna in Andhra Pradesh deserve special notice in view of their celebrity in the history of Buddhist shrines.

At Nāgapaṭṭinam a Buddhist temple is said to have been erected specifically for the Chinese Buddhists at the instance of a Chinese King during the rule of the Pallava king Narasiṁhavarman II (circa 695-722 A.D.). An important Copper-plate inscription of the eleventh century A.D. states that the Chola king Rājarāja gave a village for the maintenance of a shrine of the Buddha in the Chulāmaṇi-varma *Vihāra* which the Śailendra king had erected at Nāgapaṭṭinam. Also, the Kalyāṇī inscription of 1476 refers to the Padarikārāma monastery of Nāgapaṭṭinam. Of special interest of the antiquities discovered from this place are the three hundred fifty bronze images of Buddhist deities. These images belong to the early Chola to the Vijaynagar traditions.

The *stūpas* at Amarāvatī, Nāgārjunikoṇḍā, Bhaṭṭipralū, Jaggayyapeṭā and Ghaṇṭāśāla, erected between the second century B.C. and the third century A.D., are magnificent examples of Buddhist shrines in South India. Their importance lies not only on their unique architectural features, but also on the excellent relief sculptures embellishing these *stūpas*. The *stūpas* consisted of brick-built hemispherical domes and were characterized by rectangular projections from the base of the dome at the four cardinal points. They were finished with plastic grace, painted white, and embellished at the base with sculptured white marble panels richly carved in low relief. The earliest of the *stūpas* here is probably represented by the one at Bhaṭṭipralū, built in the second century B.C., probably by a Buddhist missionary during the time of a local king named Kuberaka. The claim that it was a *Mahāstūpa* enshrining the mortal remains of the Buddha is attested to by the discovery of a bone relic inside a crystal casket together with flowers made of glod and pearls.

On the basis of the donative records, the main *stūpa* at Amarāvatī, Dhānyakaṭaka of ancient days, may be ascribed to the third-second century B.C. But that the place remained a prominent Buddhist shrine till as late as the fourteenth century A.D. is attested to by the epigraphic documents not only mentioning the *chaityas* and *vihāras* situated at this place, but also characterizing it as a *Buddha-kṣetra* or a centre of Buddhist shrines.

On the basis of Tibetan tradition, Nāgārjunikoṇḍā is associated with the Buddhist teacher-saint Nāgārjuna who flourished in the second century A.D. This teacher is known to have spent his last days in the monastery on the Śrīparvata, idenified with the chain of hills round Nāgārjunikoṇḍā. The ladies of the Ikṣvāku dynasty (circa second half of the third and the first half of the fourth century A.D.) were the main patrons of the Buddhist establishments here. Of the many Buddhist shrines located at this place, the prominent ones comprise of a *stūpa*, a few sancturies of the type of *Chaitya-gṛiha*, a *maṇḍapa* and also the monastery or the *vihāra*. From the inscriptions on the *āyaka* pillars of the *stūpas*, it is evident that Nāgārjunikoṇḍā, the ancient city of Vijayapuri, was of

great importance as a centre of Buddhism and enjoyed international fame.

The *stūpa* at Goli, dated to the third century A.D. on the basis of a fragmentary inscription, is famous for its sculptured slabs depicting various scenes from the life of the Buddha. Similarly important is the *stūpa* at Jaggayyapeṭā, particularly in view of the relief-sculpture representing Chakravartin Māndhātā.

Apart from the above-mentioned Buddhist shrines from Andhra Pradesh, there are many others, each distinguished by the nature of Buddhist sanctuaries located there. Of these mention should be made of Gummadidurru, Gudivada—both in the District Krishna, Guntupalli in the District West Godavari, Sankaram and Rāmatīrtham in the Visakhapatnam District, and Salihundam in the District Srikakulam.

CENTRAL ZONE

Some famous Buddhist shrines of Central zone, comprising of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh, have already been taken note of in the preceding chapter. Mention should be made of a few others even from Uttar Pradesh. Of these the two sites which deserve special mention are Piprahwa in the District Basti and Kauśāmbī, identified with modern Kosam in the Allahabad District. The former is famous for its *stūpa* which is probably the largest and the earliest one so far known. The *stūpa* was built of bricks, arranged in concentric circles, the morter being clay. But, unfortunately, the other details of the form and shape of this *stūpa* cannot be reconstructed from the present ruins. Apart from the *stūpa*, there are a number of monastic establishments in different stages of preservation. But the importance of Piprahwa as a Buddhist shrine lies on the discovery of the inscribed vase from inside the *stūpa*. The inscription on the lid of the vase has been variously translated and interpreted by scholars. According to these interpretations, the vase contained relics of the Buddha or of his kinsmen and their sisters, wives and children. On palaeographic considerations, the inscription has been claimed by some scholars to belong to the pre-Aśokan period.

Kauśāmbī, the capital of the country of Vatsa, was one of the six important cities of Northern India during the time of the Buddha. From the Buddhist texts we come to know of a number of important Buddhist shrines, in the form of monasteries or shrines, in this place. Of these the most celebrated is the Ghoṣitārāma monastery which was built by one of the leading bankers of the day, named Ghoṣita who dedicated it to the Buddha. Both Fa-hien and Hiuen-tsang refer, in glorious terms, to this monastery. According to Hiuen-tsang, a *stūpa* was constructed inside this monastery by Aśoka. The excavations at Kosam, the modern site o Kauśāmbī, have laid bare the remains of a large brick monastery, identified, on the basis of an inscribed slab ascribable to the first century A.D., with the Ghoṣitārāma monastery of the ancient days.

In the central zone, the most prominant area celebrated for Buddhist shrines is the present-day Madhya Pradesh. The significant role that this area played in Buddhism is evidenced by as many as three Aśokan epigraphs—two of his Minor Rock Edicts on the rocks at Gujarra in the District Datia and at Rūpnāth in the Jabalpur District and the celebrated Edict on the Pillar that he erected at Sāñchī in the Raisen District. But the greatest fame of Madhya Pradesh in the history of Buddhist

shrines lies in magnificient Buddhist monuments of Sāñchī and Bhārhut, the latter situated in the District Satna.

Bhārhut was an important site of a Buddhist shrine—a *stūpa*. It was discovered by the archaeologists at a time when it was on its verge of obliteration due to ruins. Portions of its railing and gateways were saved by the archaeologists and were preserved at the Indian Museum, Calcutta. Later, some more fragmentary remains were brought by private individuals and were kept at the Allahabad Museum. Scholars are of the opinion that the Bhārhut *stūpa* was constructed quite early and that the railings were added later and still later, the gateways were constructed. From the study of the donative inscriptions and of the inscribed labels on sculptural panels, the scholars suggest a date in the second half of the second century B.C. for the railings. The gateways were perhaps added about fifty years thereafter, as may be gathered from an inscription on the eastern gateway claiming that it was erected by Vātasiputra Dhanabhūti, grandson of king Gārgiputra Viśvadeva, during the reign of the Śuṅgas. Thus, the date of the construction of the *stūpa* should be placed about the third century B.C.

Unfortunately, however, this early *stūpa* is now in complete ruins. From the representations of *stūpas* on the railings, it appears that the main *stūpa* consisted of a drum capped by a railing, a hemispherical dome and a *harmikā* supporting the shaft of the umbrella. At the ground level was added, later, a railing providing a space between it and the *stūpa*. This railing consisted of a series of oblong posts (*stambha*) with three parallel sets of lenticular crossbars (*sūchī*) mortised into the posts on either side and capped by a continuous coping (*uṣṇīṣa*) stone. There were four gateways, each on the cardinal points. Of these only the eastern one now survives and it consists of two pillars supporting a superstructure of three carved curviform architraves with spirally curled ends. The architraves are connected with one another by uprights. Above the topmost architrave there is the *Dharma-Chakra*.

The *stūpa* at Bhārhut is famous for the treasures of its bas-relief sculptures depicting the various stories of the life of the Buddha, both during his present birth as Gautama as well as the stories of his previous births known as the *Jātakas*. Many of these sculptured scenes accompany the identificatory labels. In these relief sculptures, Gautama Buddha is nowhere represented with a human form. His presence is indicated by a few symbols like the footprints, *Bodhi* Tree, the umbrella, the seat, the *stūpa* and similar others with which the life of the Buddha had some association.

The importance of Sāñchī as a Buddhist shrine is mainly because of the great *stūpa* and the Aśokan pillar with the so-called schism edict engraved on it. Another point of importance lies in the fact that all kinds of Buddhist architectural forms are to be noticed here. Although the monuments at Sāñchī now form the most magnificient and perfect examples of the early Buddhist art in India, the site seems to have no apparent connection with the traditional history of Gautama Buddha. But, if the Ceylonese Chronicles have to be believed, Sāñchī seems to be connected with Aśoka, the greatest patron of Buddhism. Sāñchī seems to be the same as the Cheṭiyagiri of the Ceylonese chronicles, which was situated in the neighbourhood of Vidiśā. It is connected with the story of Aśoka's marriage with a merchant's daughter and the erection of a monastery on the hill where Mahendra, Aśoka's son by that marriage, is said to have halted on the way

to his mission in Ceylon. That Sāñchī remained a great centre of Buddhism for more than a thousand years is evidenced by the numerous monuments belonging to a period between the third century B.C. and the twelfth century A.D.

Of the numerous monuments at the site the *stūpas* are the most imposing. Among the *stūpas*, again, three stand out prominently in view of their size and antiquity. *Stūpa* No. 1, known as the Great *stūpa*, was originally built of bricks, in the time of Aśoka. It was enlarged to nearly twice its previous size and was faced with stone, perhaps a century later, when the massive balustrade and the four imposing gateways at the cardinal sides were also added. The balustrades and the gateways were made by following the same constructional technique as noticed in the case of the Bhārhut *stūpa*. The similarity is there also in the basic formulations of the *stūpa*, although the Sāñchī *stūpa*, in its form and size, seems to be more advanced and elaborate. The relief sculptures in the railings and gateways at Sāñchī also show this advancement in their style and technique.

The *stūpa* No. 3, modelled after the Great *stūpa*, is of the second century B.C. and it contained, as known from the inscription on the relic casket, the bodily remains of Sāriputra and Maudgalyāyana, the two foremost disciples of the Buddha. The *stūpa* No. 2, also of the same period, does not show the gateways. It is important as a Buddhist shrine in view of the fact that it contained the body-relics of ten Buddhist teachers of at least three generations, including Kāsyapagota and Majjhima who belonged to the period of Aśoka. The other important *stūpas* at the site, e.g. Nos. 5, 12, 13, 14 and 16, belong to the sixth and seventh centuries A.D., and they show the representations of the image of the Buddha, unlike the earlier *stūpas* where the Buddha is represented through various symbols.

The monasteries at Sāñchī are generally designed on the familiar plan—an open brick-paved courtyard with an enclosing verandah and beyond the latter a range of cells. The difference between one monastery and the other lies in the compositional details and also in the ascription of a second story in some of them. But all these monasteries belong to a period between the sixth and the twelfth cenuries A.D.

Of the temples at Sāñchī the most important is the Temple No. 17 datable to the Gupta period. It is an unpretentious shrine of modest dimensions. It consists of a flat-roofed square chamber with a pillared portico in front. Its structural propriety, symmetry and proportions, and application of plane surfaces for a restrained visual effect compare favourable with the best architectural expressions of classical Greece. As opposed to this temple, the others, some of which show the apsidal ground-plan, seem to be of a later period.

Many other important Buddhist shrines are situated in the central zone. Of these, mention should be made at least of Bagh in the District Dhar, Dhamnar in the District Mandasor and Sirpur in the Raipur District. Bagh is famous for its rock-cut caves mostly in the form of Buddhist monastic establishment. But these caves are more famous for the paintings on their walls and ceilings. These paintings, although mostly surviving now in patches, are virtually parallel examples of the style represented by the best of the Ajanta murals. Dhamnar, which is also famous for its rock-cut caves, seems to be the site of one of the largest Buddhist establishments. More than fifty caves in the form

of monasteries and *Chaitya-gṛihas* represented this establishment. Here one can notice a predominance of the *stūpa* form. *Stūpas* could be noticed here, free-standing in the open, as objects of worship inside cave-halls, and as decorative motifs shown within niches. Sirpur is generally known to be a centre of Brahmanical culture. But here have been discovered not only the ruins of Buddhist monasteries but also a number of images of Buddhist deities. It was a centre of metal-casting as is evidenced by the discovery of many bronze images of Buddhist affiliation. Another important centre of Buddhist metal images, in the central zone, is Phophnar in the District East Nimar. The site yielded seven bronze images of standing Buddha in *abhaya-mudrā* and five bronze parasols. Of these images four bear dedicatory inscriptions in the fifth-sixth century A.D. scripts.

Before we conclude the survey of Buddhist shrines in the Central Zone, it is important that we refer to the most glorious of the Buddhist sites : Kapilavastu to which Gautama Buddha originally belonged. There is a long-standing controversy regarding the present location of this ancient capital of the Śākyas. Of the various suggestions for its identification, two seem to come nearer the ancient literary accounts available for this site, and archaeological evidence also supports either of these two suggestions as valid. The first suggestion favours the identification of Kapilavastu with Piprāhwa in the District Basti of the Uttar Pradesh. The other view points to Tilaura-koṭ, District Jaulihawa in the Nepalese Tarai as the present site for the ancient Kapilavastu. Latest view of the archaeologists, however, favours the former identification as more valid. According to them, Piprāhwa and its surrounding villages like Ganwari, with their extensive ruins of Buddhist edifices, represent the present location of Kapilavastu, the celebrated centre of Buddhist heritage.

EASTERN ZONE

In the Eastern Zone, there are quite a number of important Buddhist shrines. Some of them are famous not only because of their association with Gautama Buddha, but also due to the celebrity they acquired as centres of Buddhist education and culture. Among the important places of Buddhist pilgrimage in the Eastern Zone mention should be made of Kapilavastu, Lumbinī and Bodhgayā. Kapilavastu was the parental home of the Buddha, and Lumbinī was the place where he took his birth. Bodhgayā represents the seat wherefrom the Buddha attained the Supreme Knowledge or *Bodhi*. These Buddhist shrines have already been taken note of in the preceding chapter.

Of the remaining shrines mention should first be made of Lauriyā Nandangarh in the Champaran district of Bihar. Its fame is due to the inscribed Aśokan pillar situated at this place. The capital of the pillar consists of a lotus supporting the circular abacus on which is seated a single lion. Apart from this, there are about twenty smaller and one big mounds at this place. Underneath these mounds there are evidences of brick structures and various other remains like clay tablets with the figure of the Buddha or the Buddhist creed inscribed on them, punch-marked coins and a gold leaf with the figure of a standing female in repousse. The mounds presumably represent the remnants of Buddhist *stūpa*. The largest mound represents a *stūpa* structure of interesting form. Its basement was cruciform in shape with a number of re-entrant angles. Above this, there were two more polygonal

stages. Finally, there was the circular stage. From inside this *stūpa* has been discovered a copper casket containing a birch-bark manuscript of a Buddhist text written in the characters of the fourth century A.D.

Another famous Buddhist shrine in Bihar is the monastic monuments at Nālandā in the Patna district. Its importance is due to a number of Buddhistic associations with this place. Apart from the fact that the Buddha visited Nālandā several times, the sanctity of the place is due to the reasons that Sāriputra, the famous disciple of the Buddha, was born here and that Nāgārjuna, the celebrated Mahāyāna scholar of the second century A.D., was the high priest of Nālandā. But the real fame of Nālandā rests on its monastic establishments and on its celebrity as the-then prime seat of learning. Nālandā seems to have acquired the position of eminence from the Gupta period onwards and it continued with its prestigious stature through the reign period of the Pālas. Major patronage and support for the Nālandā establishment came not only from the rulers of these two dynasties, but also from Harṣavardhana of Thaneswar, who ruled in between.

From the accounts of the Chinese pilgrim Hiuen-tsang, who not only visited Nālandā but also studied there, we come to know that, in the seventh century A.D., Nālandā was the most stupendous monastic establishment on the one hand and a great seat of learning on the other. According to him, it was a huge establishment accommodating as many as 10,000 inmates. Another Chinese pilgrim, I-tsing, informs us that the establishment was maintained by 200 villages donated by several kings. In view of its multi-discipline curriculam, coupled with the numerical strength and qualitative eminence of the Faculty and the students, Nālandā acquired the stature and prestige of a university drawing students and teachers from far and near. Several of the teachers of this university, like Ācārya Śīlabhadra, Śāntarakṣita and Atiśa or Dīpaṅkara, not only left a mark on the souls of those who went to Nālandā to study, but their versatile genius transmitted to distant places all around.

The archaeological remnants of the monastic establishment—the celebrated Nālandā Mahāvihāra—which comprised the university and the edifices, are vast and extensive indeed. As many as eleven monasteries have been uncovered by the archaeologists. A number of temples and *stūpas* of various sizes and forms add to the antiquarian remains of the grandeur that was Nālandā.

The buildings were aligned lengthwise from north to south, the monasteries being situated on the eastern flank and the temples and *stūpas* on the west. The monasteries were built more or less on the same plan : rows of cells round a courtyard entered through a gateway preceded by a portico. Opposite to the entrance, against the back wall of the courtyard, there was a chapel. Some of the monasteries were storeyed structures.

Nālandā has yielded a wealth of archaeological materials of Buddhistic import. Of these, mention should first be made of numerous sculptures, both in stone and metal, depicting Buddhist deities. Numerous copper-plate and stone inscriptions and inscribed bricks and terracotta seals are the other important antiquities discovered from this place. Of the inscriptions, the most notable is the official seal of the university, engraved on stone, with the Wheel of Dhamma, flanked with a deer on either side, bearing the inscription : "Venerable Community of Monks of the Nālandā Mahāvihāra". From an inscription

tion it is known that the Śailendra king Bālaputradeva of Sumātrā built here a monastery for the maintenance of which the Pālā ruler Devapāla granted five villages. The metal sculptures discovered from Nālandā stand testimony to the achievements of the artists in this direction. Kurkihār in the Gaya district of Bihar was the other important centre of metal sculpture of Buddhist images.

In this connection mention should be made of at least three other monastic shrines of Buddhism in eastern India, which attained great celebrity as centres of learning during the Pāla period. These are the Vikramaśīlā, Jagaddala and the Odantapurī monasteries. The first one, tentatively identified as Antichak-Pāṭharghāṭā near Colgong, district Bhagalpur in Bihar, was founded by Dharmapāla. The fame and prestige of this monastic university was due largely to its association with Dīpaṅkara Śrījñāna, the renowned Buddhist scholar, who became the head of this establishment and, later, migrated to Tibet, on the invitation of its king, and founded Lamaism there. The Jagaddala-Mahāvihāra was founded by Rāmapāla in Varendrī in north Bengal. The Odantapurī-Mahāvihāra, also built by the Pālas, was probably situated at the present-day Biharsharif near Nālandā.

In Orissa, there exist two versions of Aśoka's Major Rock Edicts, one at Dhauli (district Puri) near Bhuvaneswar and the other at Jaugada (district Ganjam). Whether these could be referred to as the Buddhist shrines in Orissa may be an open question. But it is interesting to note that the Dhauli rock is rendered as the forepart of an elephant which is interpreted by many as the theriomorphic representation of the Buddha who was known as the "best of the elephants" (*gajatama*). Another early Buddhist shrine in Orissa is represented by the Puṣpagiri monastery that Hiuen-tsang refers to. This has been identified with the contiguous hills of Lalitagiri and Udayagiri in the Cuttack district.

Ratnagiri, also in the Cuttack district, represents the most important of the monastic establishments in Orissa. Starting with its foundation presumably in the fifth century A.D., it developed through the twelfth century as an important centre of art and architecture of Buddhism. On the basis of the discovery of a number of sealings bearing inscriptional legends, it is clear that it was an important monastery of Buddhism (*Bhikṣu saṅghasya*). The archaeological remnants of a huge establishment consisting of a number of monasteries, *stūpas* and temples, together with a great mass of sculptural materials, in stone and metal, pertaining to the representation of Buddhist deities stand testimony to the flourishing state of this famous Buddhist shrine.

Khiching in the Mayurbhanj district of Orissa also represents another Buddhist shrine of importance. Apart from the several isolated sanctuaries of varied plans noticed here, the importance of the site is due to the numerous Buddhist images discovered from this place. Another site, Achutrājpur, near the Banur Police Station in the Puri district, deserves special mention because it has yielded the richest hoard of bronze images in Orissa. These bronze images, mostly of Buddhist deities, are of much significance not only for their artistic quality, but also for the iconography they represent.

In Bengal, there existed numerous Buddhist shrines. Fa-hien, the Chinese pilgrim, refers to Tāmralipti, modern Tamluk in the Midnapur district of West Bengal, as a flourishing centre of Buddhism in the fifth century A.D. Hiuen-tsang, the

Chinese pilgrim of the seventh century A.D., refers to two important Buddhist monasteries in Bengal : *Po-shih-po* and *Lo-to-mo-chih*. The former is identified with the mounds of Bihar and Bhasur-Vihar near Mahāsthān, district Bogra in Bangladesh. *Lo-to-mo-chih*, representing the Raktamṛittikā-Mahāvihāra, has been identified with Rangamati, a locality near the Chiruti Railway station in the Murshidabad district of West Bengal. From the accounts of the Chinese traveller I-tsing we find the names of some Buddhist shrines of which two seem to be of much importance. These are the *Mi-li-kia-si-kia-po-no* (Mṛigasthāpana) in Varendra (north Bengal) and the *A-li-ki-lo*, identified with Harikela, which probably represented the Sylhet district and the littoral areas of the Chittagong district of Bangladesh. Interestingly, both these places are referred to as late as 1015 A.D. in a Buddhist manuscript through inscribed illustrations of the Mṛigasthāpana *stūpa* and of the image of Śīla-Lokanātha of Harikelladeśa.

The most famous of the Buddhist shrines in Bengal is the Somapura-Mahāvihāra, identified with Paharpur in the Rajshāhi district of Bangladesh. It was established by Dharmapāla (circa 770-810 A.D.) as is known from the discovery of sealings with the legend mentioning the name of the Somapura-Mahāvihāra together with that of Dharmapāladeva. It is the largest monastery so far known in India. It was well-planned and homogeneous in the layout—the residential cells for the monks and the temple were situated within a single well-defined compound. The central temple rose in three terraces and it was *pañcharatha* on plan in all sides, except the northern side, which was *saptaratha*. The temple wall was decorated with numerous terracotta plaques on bricks. These depicted various subjects including many Buddhist and Brahmanical deities. The importance of the Somapura-Mahāvihāra is no less due to the fact that Dīpaṅkara Śrījñāna stayed here for years and that his spiritual preceptor Ratnākaraśānti belonged to this monastic establishment.

Another celebrated Buddhist shrine in Bengal was situated at the ancient site of Paṭṭikerā, identified with the present-day Mainamati-Lalmai Ridge in the Tippera district of Bangladesh. The Buddhist rulers of the Khaḍga, Deva and Chandra dynasties—seventh to the eleventh centuries—contributed much to make it a flourishing centre of Buddhist activity. The celebrated monastery—Bhavadeva-Mahāvihāra—was founded here by Bhavadeva of the Deva dynasty. In an inscribed illustration in a Buddhist manuscript of 1015 A.D., there is the representation of the goddess Chundā of the shrine at Paṭṭikerā. Archaeological excavation has laid bare here a huge monastic establishment with a central temple of the *pañcharatha* plan, similar to the one known from Paharpur. The terracotta sealing with an inscribed legend discovered from here testifies to its being the Bhavadeva-Mahāvihāra. Numerous other antiquities discovered from this site show the glory and garandeur that this Buddhist shrine once was.

There existed many other Buddhist shrines in Bengal. It is not possible to mention all of them. But a few of them, like Chandraketugarh (Berachampa, 24 Parganas, West Bengal), Devīkoṭa (Bangarh district, West Dinajpur, West Bengal), Paṇḍitā (Chittagong, Bangladesh), Vikramapura (Rampal, Dacca district, Bangladesh) and Jhewari (Chittagong in Bangladesh), deserve mention in view of the importance of the Buddhistic remains discovered from these centres. The Cambridge University manuscript of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā-Prajñāpāramitā*, dated 1015 A.D., preserves,

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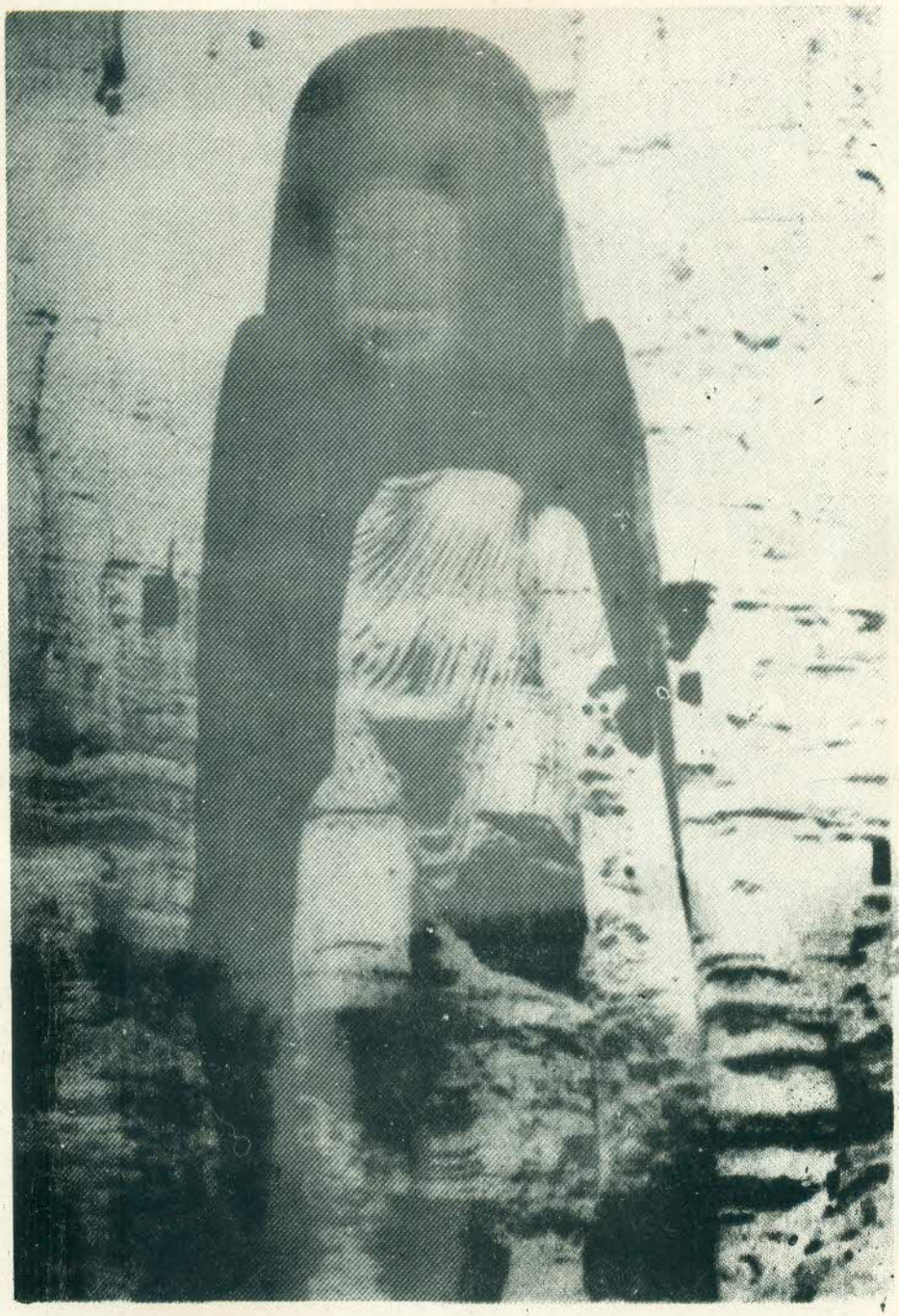

Buddha image—**Bamiyan, Afghanistan**

Painting from Tun-huang

Buddha—Yun-kang, China

Pagoda of the Horyuji monastery, Japan

Ananda temple,
Pagan, Burma

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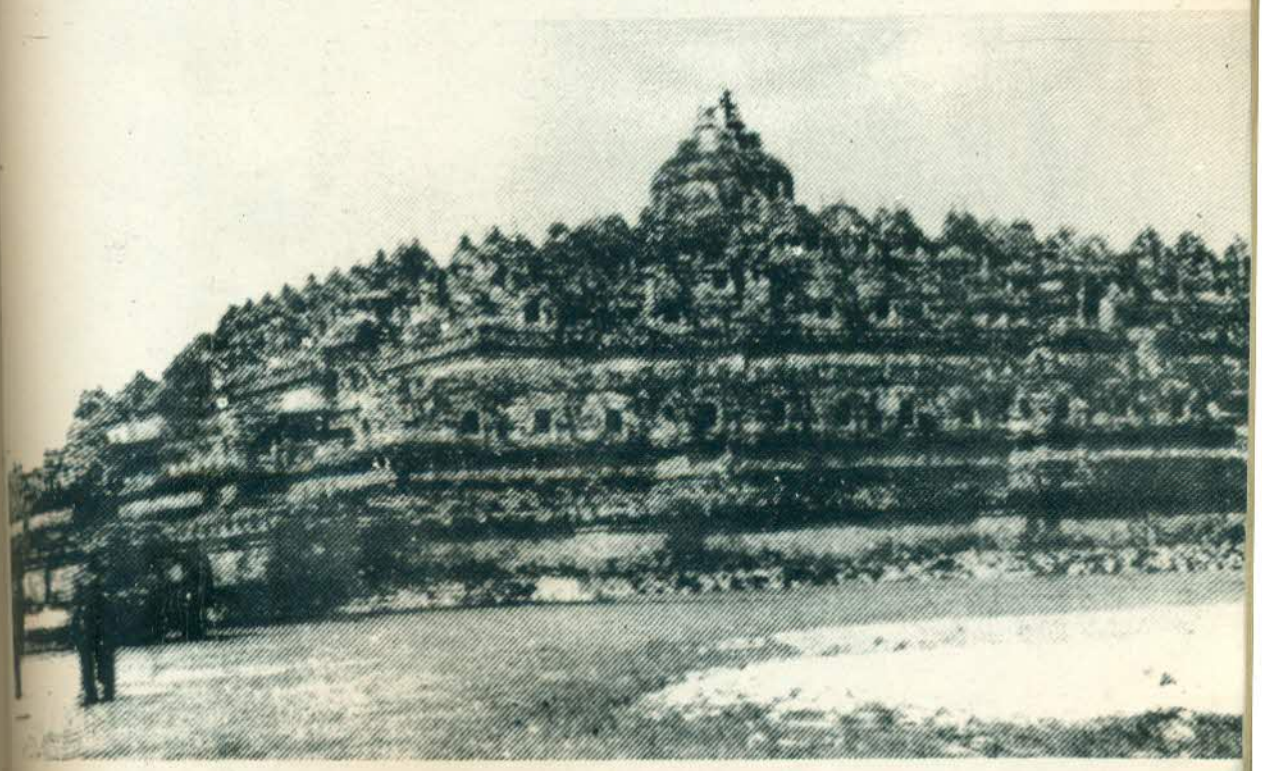

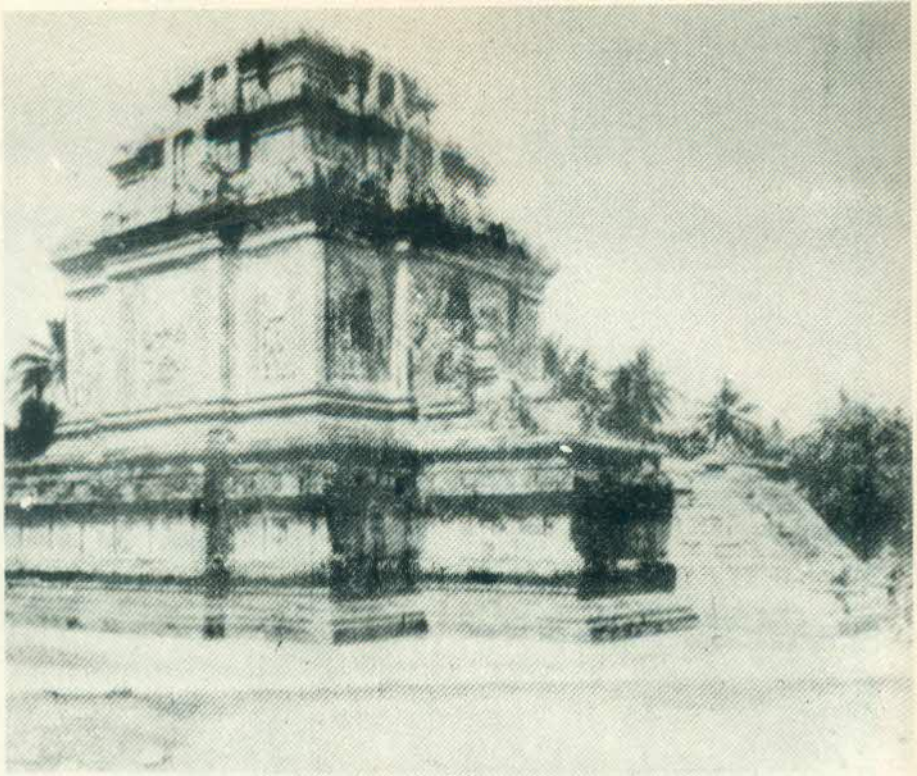

Candi Mendut, Java

Thuparamma Dagoba,
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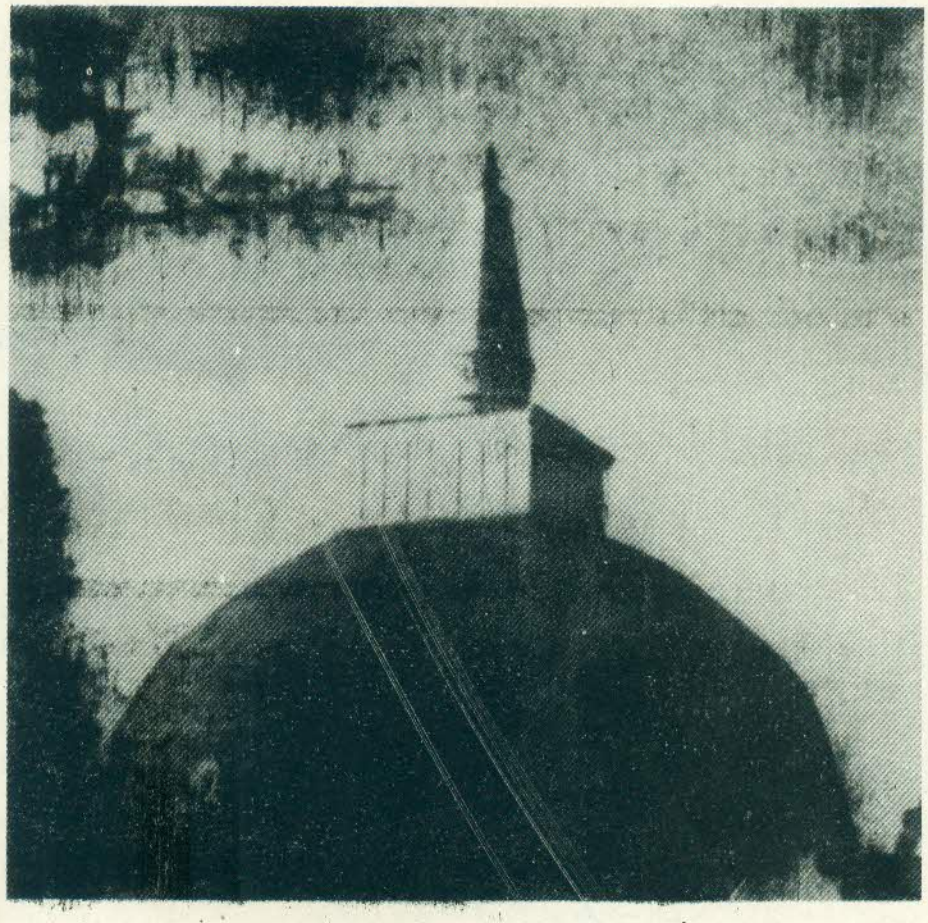
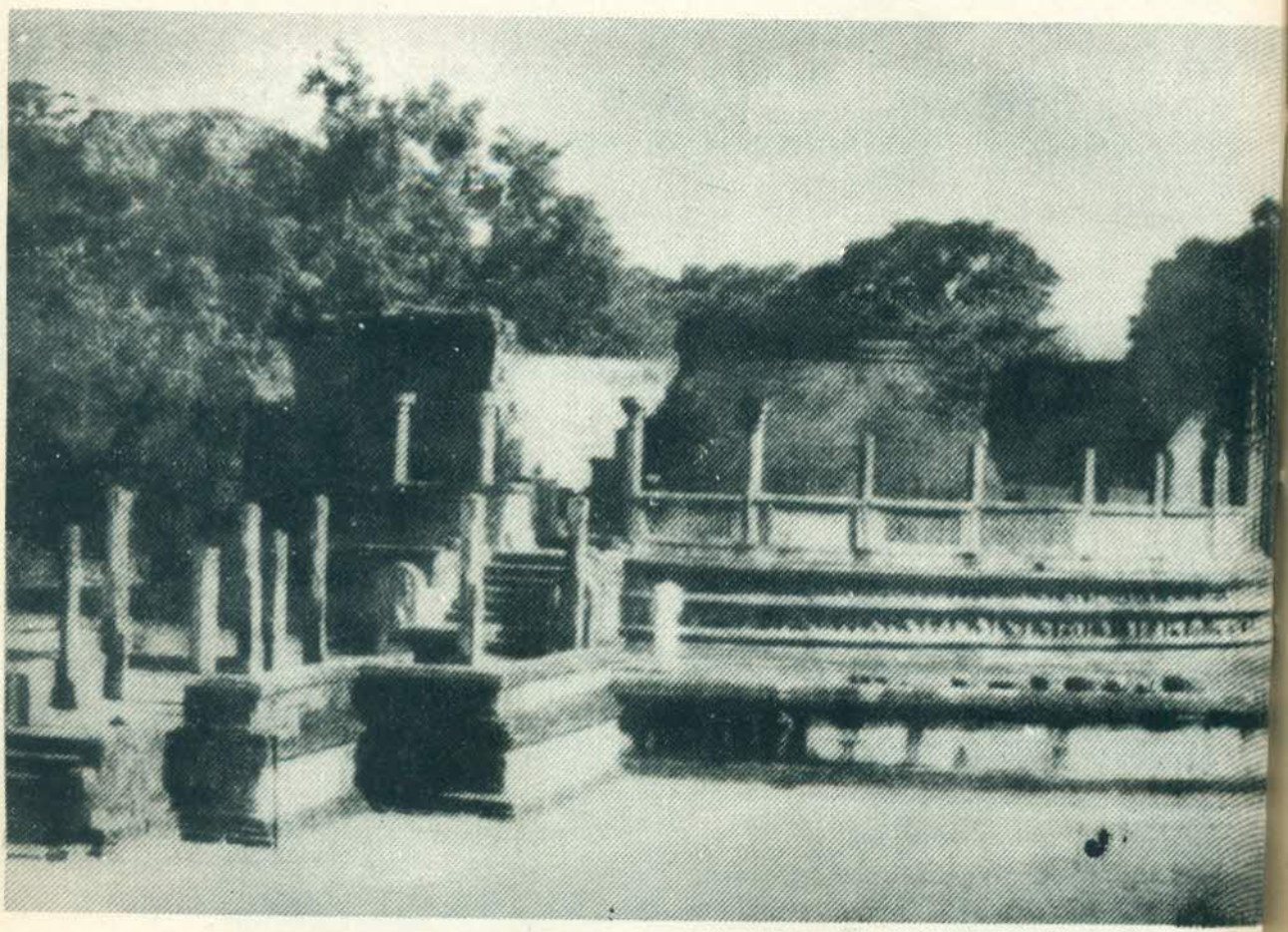


Ruvenveli Dagoba, Anuradhapuram, Ceylon



Wata-da-ge, Polonnaruwa, Ceylon

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It is no doubt surprising that, of all the places in eastern India, very few Buddhist shrines are known from Assam. Although Bhāṣkara-varman, the ruler of Kāmarūpa in the seventh century A.D., was in friendly terms with Harṣavardhana, who was a great patron of Buddhism, it is significant that Hiuen-tsang, who visited Kāmarūpa, did not see there any Buddhist shrine worth mentioning. The Tibetan historian Lama Tāranāth, however, speaks of the flourishing state of Buddhism in Assam. It seems, therefore, that Buddhistic activity picked up rather late in this part of eastern India. Here Buddhism came possibly as a complement to the Tantric practices for which this land was famous for centuries. Tibetan sources claim that the celebrated Tantric Buddhist saints Saraha and Luipā or Matsyendranātha hailed from this country. In this connection it has also to be mentioned that Kāmarūpa in Assam is known, in the Tantric Buddhist tradition, as the foremost of the four major sacred places or *Pīṭhas*.

Chapter Four

Buddhist Shrines in other Countries

THERE are numerous Buddhist shrines which are situated outside the political geography of India today. Some of them are very famous not only because of their eminence in the history of Buddhism, but also due to the size and architectural distinctiveness of the monuments they represent. Our study of these shrines should begin with those situated in the territory known, in ancient days, as Gandhāra.

The territory between the hills of Swat and Buner on the north, the hills of Kalabag on the south, modern Lamghan and Jalalabad on the west, and the Indus on the east constituted the geographical limit of Gandhāra. Most probably its eastern limit extended further to include the Rawalpindi district. All the three capital-cities of Gandhāra, viz., Puṣkalāvatī (Charsada and Prang), Puruṣapura (Peshawar) and Takṣaśilā (Taxila) were famous centres of Buddhist shrines. Ever since the days of Aśoka, Buddhism played a dominant role in the Gandhāran region. This region has the distinction of having the Kharoṣṭhī versions of the Fourteen Rock Edicts of Aśoka at Shahbazgarhi (Peshawar district) and Mansera (Hazara district). Under the patronage of the alien rulers—the Indo-Greeks and the Indo-Scyths—Buddhism flourished in Gandhāra for centiuries. Both the Chinese pilgrims—Fa-hien and Hiuen-tsang—saw numerous Buddhist establishments there. The Buddhist shrines consisted of *stūpas*, monasteries and Chapels. Most of the important structural *stūpas* are in ruins now. Gandhāra has, however, yielded numerous miniature replica *stūpas*, both of the traditional hemispherical and of the cylindrical types. The plan of the Gandhāran monasteries was essentially the same as that of the rest of India. But a few features of novelty and conspicuity are noticed in a number of examples of *stūpa* and *vihāra*.

Of the numerous Buddhist shrines in Gandhāra, mention should first be made of the *stūpa* erected by Kaṇiṣka at his capital Puruṣapura which is identified with Peshawar. From the descriptions of Hiuen-tsang and Sun-yun, it seems to have been a lofty monument. It is commemorated as the 'Sri Kanaka-chaitya of Puruṣapura of Uttarāpatha' in an inscribed miniature in a Buddhist manuscript of A.D. 1015. The remains of this *stūpa* laid bare at the present-day Sah-ji-ki-dheri include the famous inscribed reliquary casket with representation of the figure of the Buddha. The inscription refers to Kaṇiṣka's *vihāra* in Mahāsena's *saṅghārāma*, and a copper coin of this ruler has been found close to the relic chamber.

In the same Peshawar district, three other Buddhist shrines, viz., Takht-i-Bahi, Sahri-bahlol, and Jamalgarhi, are notable establishments consisting of *stūpas*, monasteries, and chapels. The nucleus of the Takht-i-Bahi establishment may be ascribed to the patronage of the Indo-Parthian king Gandophernes (beginning of the first century

A.D.), while the other two seem to have flourished mostly with the patronage of the Kuṣāṇas and the Kidāra Kuṣāṇas. These shrines were the leading centres of Buddhist sculptures in stucco.

Taxila or Takṣaśilā, one of the principal cities of ancient India, was an important centre of Buddhist shrines. The ruins of Taxila consist of a number of sites of which Bhir Mound, Sirkap and Sirsukh are the most notable ones. These city-sites, and many other sites of lesser importance, have yielded ruins of Buddhist establishments consisting of *stūpa* courts, monasteries, and temples of various dimensions and forms. The most notable of the Buddhist edifices is the celebrated Dharmarājika *stūpa* which is known to be the most important of the eightyfour thousand *stūpas* constructed by Aśoka, as the tradition has it. The Buddhist shrines of Kalawan, near the Dharmarājika *stūpa*, are also of much importance, particularly because of the discovery of a relic-casket and a copper-plate inscription recording the deposit of relics at Chādaśilā by a female worshipper in the year 134 of Azes. Another important Buddhist shrine in Taxila is the Kuṇāla-*stūpa* which was probably built in the fourth century A.D. Takṣaśilā or Taxila is known in ancient literature, particularly in the Buddhist *Jātakas*, as the city with the most prestigious university in the country. The celebrated Buddhist physician Jivaka of Rājagriha is known to have studied at the university of Taxila or Takṣaśilā.

The Buddhist *stūpas* at Manikyala, 20 miles south-east of Rawalpindi, and of Mirpur-Khas in the district Thar and Parker in Sindh are important not only for the novelty of the architectural features of the *stūpas*, but also due to the Buddhist relics discovered from these sites. The importance of Manikyala has been enhanced by the discovery of a few interesting Buddhist images in bronze. Several terracotta plaques depicting Buddhist images have been discovered from Mirpur-Khas.

The alien rulers of Gandhāra—the Indo-Greeks and Indo-Scythians—were great patrons of Buddhism. They played an important role in spreading Buddhism to Afganistan and, even beyond that, to Central Asia. The most important of the Buddhist shrines in Afganistan is Kapiśā, identified as the present Begram on the Ghorband river. Hiuen-tsang describes it as a flourishing centre of Mahāyāna Buddhism. He refers to many imposing *stūpas* and monasteries located at this place. Another Buddhist shrine was at Haḍḍā, near the modern town of Jalalabad. But the most important was Bamiyan in the north-central Afganistan. The monasteries and temples at Bamiyan were carved entirely from the face of the sandstone cliff. The fame of this shrine is more due to the two colossal Buddha images—one with 120 feet height and the other with 175 feet—carved inside the caves. Hiuen-tsang has given praiseful description of these colossi. Bamiyan is equally important for the wall-paintings depicting Buddhas and Bodhisattvas and the related themes of Buddhism.

Afganistan was the gateway to Central Asia or the Chinese Turkistan from a very early period. There existed trade routes between Kashgar or Khotan in the western end and Tun-huang in China in the east. There were two routes—the northern and the southern—which skirted the edges of the Taklamakan desert. In these routes cropped up, through the centuries, a number of Buddhist shrines—obviously with the patronage and endeavours of the tradesmen many of whom were devout Buddhists. The northern route had the major shrines at Kizil, Kucha, Turfan and Bezaklik, whereas Dandan Uiliq and Miran were the important

centre of Buddhist shrine on the southern route. Beautiful examples of Buddhist paintings and other antiquarian remains have made these Buddhist shrines famous in the annals of the art of Buddhism. At the eastern end was Tun-huang in China which came to be known as "Caves of the Thousand Buddhas" in view of the existence here of thousands of caves with sculptured figures in clay, frescoes, libraries of scrolls, manuscripts and banners related to Buddhism.

In the early centuries of the Christian era, the missionery monks over the Central Asian trade routes seem to have brought Buddhism to China. In the beginning, it was introduced in north China, and gradually it spread to the south. Buddhism received good patronage during A.D. 220-589—referred to as the period of the Six Dynasties—between the Han and the Sui dynasties. During the period of the T'ang dynasty (618-907 A.D.), the art of Buddhism in China attained a high standard of maturity and potentiality to transmit Buddhist art to Japan and Korea. The impact that Buddhism made in China is known from the fact that Fa-hien and Hiuen-tsang, the Chinese travellers visited India, in the fifth and seventh centuries respectively, in quest of Buddhist learning and ethos.

Of the Buddhist shrines in China we have already mentioned the "Caves of the Thousand Buddhas" at Tun-huang. The fifth century cave at Yun-Kang, Shansi, with the representation of the colossal Buddha, is equally famous. The Buddhist cave at Lung-men, Honan, dedicated in A.D. 527, also deserves mention. The cave-temple complex at Hsiang-Tang-Shan, Shansi, ascribable to the Northern Ch'i Dynasty, A.D. 550-577, represents an important Buddhist shrine. It has yielded some of the most imaginative and sculpturally convincing products of the period.

Although Buddhism was introduced to Japan through a Korean Mission in A.D. 552, the faith got its footing through the efforts of prince Shotoku (A.D. 572-621) who established Buddhism as the state religion. About this period, probably around 610 A.D., was founded the celebrated Horyu-ji temple at Nara. It is a huge complex with the pagoda, monastery, cloister and the gateways. Its Golden Hall has beautiful frescoes of about A.D. 710. These depict the four Directional Paradises of the four Buddhas and a few panels of the attendant Bodhisattvas. The Tamamushi shrine in the Horyu-ji complex also contains paintings showing the *Jātaka* legends and other themes of Buddhism. The cave shrine of T'ien-Lung-Shan is famous for the finest examples of Buddhist sculptures. The eighth century temple of Todai-ji at Nara was so big as to enshrine a sixty feet high bronze image of the Buddha. The Tochibana shrine of the Nara period is one of the most beautiful Buddhist monuments showing priceless Buddhist sculptures. Of the numerous Buddhist shrines of the subsequent periods, mention should be made of Muro-ji, Ho-O-Do, Konjiki-Do and Kanshin-ji.

The greatest shrine of Buddhism in Cambodia is the celebrated Angkor Thom which was built by the Buddhist king Jayavarman VII in the twelfth century. It was in the nature of a huge city-complex and surrounded by walls and moats. The entry was through gate-pavillions with four colossal faces of Lokeśvara, which, at the same time, symbolize the power of the king. At the centre of Angkor Thom was the sacred temple-mountain called the Bayon. This temple consisted of terraced tiers of the towers with similar motif of the faces. To the north-east of Angkor Thom was situated another Buddhist shrine, the Neak Pean, which has the representation of a huge white

horse symbolizing the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara as the savior of sailors from drowning.

Siam or Thailand is the land of many Buddhist shrines. Of the Buddhist *stūpas* in Thailand—known there as *chedi*—the most notable is the one at Nakon Pathom which is also known as Phra Pathom Chedi or the first sanctuary. It consisted of a vast circular *stūpa* with four *vihāras* grouped round it. The dome of this *stūpa* was shaped like an inverted cup. Another type of Buddhist shrine consisted of a *mondop* or cell-chamber to enshrine the image of the Buddha. The superstructures of such shrines were built in the form of *stūpa* with successive superimposed terraces. The best example of such a shrine is the Pra Barom That Chaiya. Of the stone temples or *Prasad Hin*, at Lopburi, the one at Pimai is the most notable. Also notable is the Wat-Maha Tat. Of the numerous other Buddhist shrines of Thailand mention should be made of the Chedi Yod, Thong Phum Khao Bin, the Chedi of Wat Chand Lom at Sawankalok, the Chedi of Wat Chedi Chet Thaew at Sisatchanalai, the Chedi at Wat Pra Sri-Sanpet of the Ayudhya province and the Chedi at Wat Phukhaotong.

Another land with numerous Buddhist shrines is Burma. The most prominent form of Buddhist shrine in Burma is the *chetiya* or the *stūpa*. The Bobo-gyi *stūpa* at Hamawza, the ninth century edifice, represents the early type of Pyu *stūpa* which gave rise to the Bupaya *stūpa*-shrine at Pagan in the tenth century. Later, in the eleventh century, were erected the magnificient tower-shrines like the Schwe Sandaw and the Lokānanda temple, both at Pagan. The best expression of the type could be seen in the Seinnyet Nyima temple at Myinpagen. The celebrated Ānanda temple at Pagan represents the greatest achievement of the builders of the Buddhist shrines in Burma. Not only the beautiful spire of the temple, not only the colossal image of the Buddha enshrined in it, but also the reliefs of Buddhist subjects, lavishly adorning the inside of it, are the significant landmarks in the history of the art of Buddhism. The style was carried through, with modifications and changes, the Gawdawpalin temple at Pagan, and, finally, the celebrated Schwe Dagon Pagoda in Rangoon.

In Java, a shrine—Buddhist or Hindu—is known as the *chaṇḍī*. Of the Buddhist *chaṇḍīs* or shrines mention should first be made of the Chandi Kalasan in central Java not only due to its architectural novelty, but also because, according to an inscription on its walls, it was dedicated to the Buddhist goddess Tārā in the year A.D. 778. The greatest patron of Buddhism in Java was the Śailendra dynasty (778-864 A.D.). Borobudur, the colossal temple-mountain, was built during this period. Consisting of multiple square and circular stages—the former oriented into sculptured galleries and the latter with seventytwo latticed *stūpas*—crowned by a big *stūpa*, the monument is the lithic representation of the World Mountain—Meru—of the Buddhist cosmology. It is also a symbolic manifestation of the Buddhist Doctrines of *Tri-Kaya*, of *Daśa-Bhūmi*, and of the *Tri-Dhātus : Kāma*, *Rūpa* and *Arūpa*. Another Buddhist shrine of huge proportions is the Chandi Sewu consisting of a cruciform central temple surrounded by a number of smaller chapels. The Chandi Mendut is famous for its treasures of Buddhist sculptures of the esoteric order. The three-storeyed shrine Chandi Sari, with a number of *stūpas* crowning it, resembles a hollowed-out version of the Borobudur.

Both Anurādhāpura and Polonnaruwa—the two major centres of ancient and medieval art of Ceylon—are full of Buddhist

shrines of various forms. The most important of the Buddhist shrines, the *stūpa*, is known in Ceylon as the *Dāgoba* or *dhātugarbha* (relic chamber). The Thupārāma and the Ruvenveli are the most notable of the ancient *dāgobas* of Anurādhāpura. The Ruvenveli, in its original form, was one and half times the size of the Great *Stūpa* at Amarāvatī in India. A characteristic feature of the *dāgobas* in Ceylon is the presence of the four altar-frontispieces or *wahalkadas* at the cardinal points of the monument. Of the shrines located at Polonnaruwa, the Gal Vihāra is the most celebrated because of the colossal rock-cut Parinirvāṇa image of the Buddha. Inside the Great Quadrangle at Polonnaruwa are situated five important shrines. Of these, the Hata-da-ge or the Tooth Relic Temple and the Wata-da-ge or the Round Temple of the Tooth Relic are the most important. Another shrine of importance was the Thupārāma. The Sāt Mahal Pāsāda can also be mentioned in this connection, since the monument, resembling architectural types from Cambodia and Siam, seems to have been originally a *stūpa* symbolizing the World Mountain—the Meru.

Nepal is the land of the Buddha. Not only that it gave to the world the Messiah of the Humanity—Gautama Buddha, it also has kept alive the message of the Master through the centuries. With numerous Buddhist shrines, Nepal has perpetuated the glory that Buddhism once represented. Of these shrines the most important ones are the *stūpas*. Two ancient *stūpas* of Nepal deserve special mention. These are the Svayambhunātha and the Bodhnātha. They have the usual attributes of a *stūpa*—like the square base, hemispherical dome, conical spire on the box-like structure. But the most distinctive feature of these *stūpas* in Nepal is the pair of colossal eyes on each face of the *harmikā*.

Tibetan *stūpas*, known as the *chorten* are more stylized than their Nepalese or Indian counterparts. Of the numerous monuments of the type mention could be made of the celebrated Gyn-tse *chorten*. Tibetan Buddhism, which later came to be known as Lāmāism, has its head in the Dālāi Lāmā. Potalaka or Potala, the abode of the Dālāi Lāmā, is one of the most distinguished shrines of Buddhism in Tibet.

Another neighbouring country, Bhutan, has also a number of important Buddhist shrines. But these are mostly in the nature of monasteries. Of the monastic shrines of Bhutan mention should be made of the Punākhā shrine, Simtokhā monastery, Wangdu Phodrang monastery, Thimphu Dzong monastery and the Tak-Sang monastery. The Bajo monastery also should be mentioned in connection with the Buddhist shrines of Bhutan.

The Buddhist shrines in Bangladesh have already been referred to in connection with the discussion on the shrines in the eastern zone of India. Although politically Bangladesh is a separate Nation, these shrines had to be discussed along with the others of the Indian part of Bengal in view of the proximity between the two in respect of the basic formulations of the architectural design.

Appendix

Buddhist Shrines in the Himalayas

HERE we take note of the few Buddhist shrines which are situated in the Himalayan regions and which could not be fitted in either of the two preceding chapters dealing with the shrines. They had to be separated not only because of the problem of thier distribution in terms of the regional framework—east-west-north-south, but also due to the fact that these Buddhist shrines share a common typology and, perhaps, they belong to the same cultural ethos.

Only a few of the Buddhist shrines of this category are being taken note of here.

In Sikkim

Namchi monastery
Sinon monastery
Pemiangste monastery
Lachung monastery
Lachen monastery
Rumtek monastery

In Ladakh

Thikse monastery
Alchi monastery
Phyang monastery
Lamayuru monastery
Hemis monastery

In Lahaul and Spiti

Tabo monastery, Spiti valley
Kye monastery, Spiti valley
Gurughantal monastery, Lahaul valley
Nako monastery, Spiti valley
Tayul monastery, Lahaul valley
Gemur monastery, Lahaul valley

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